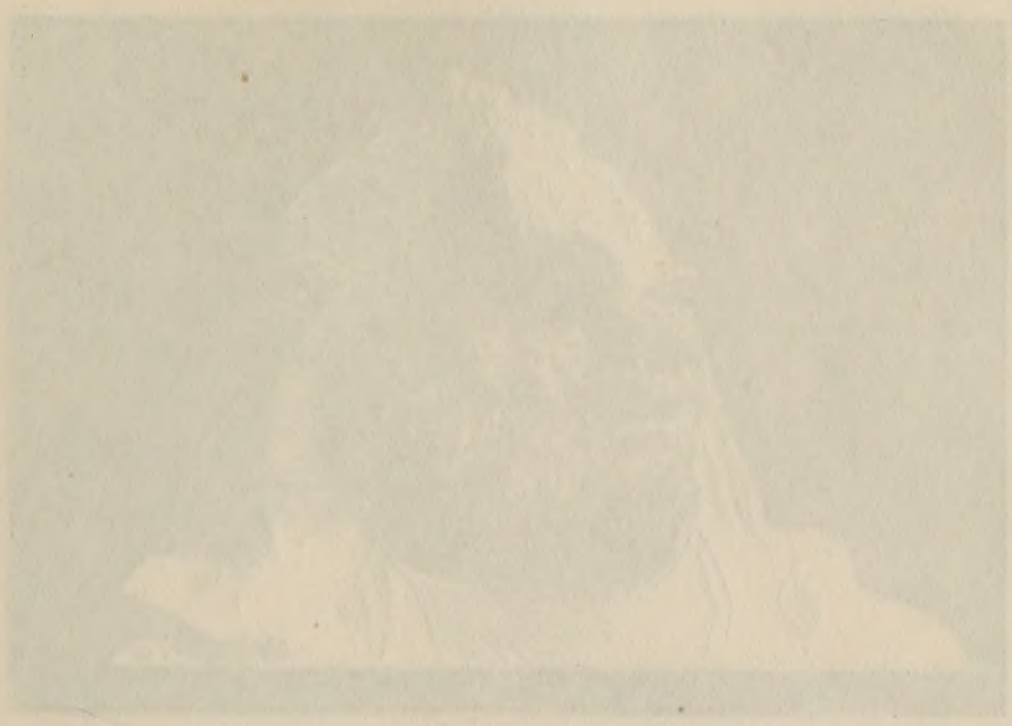
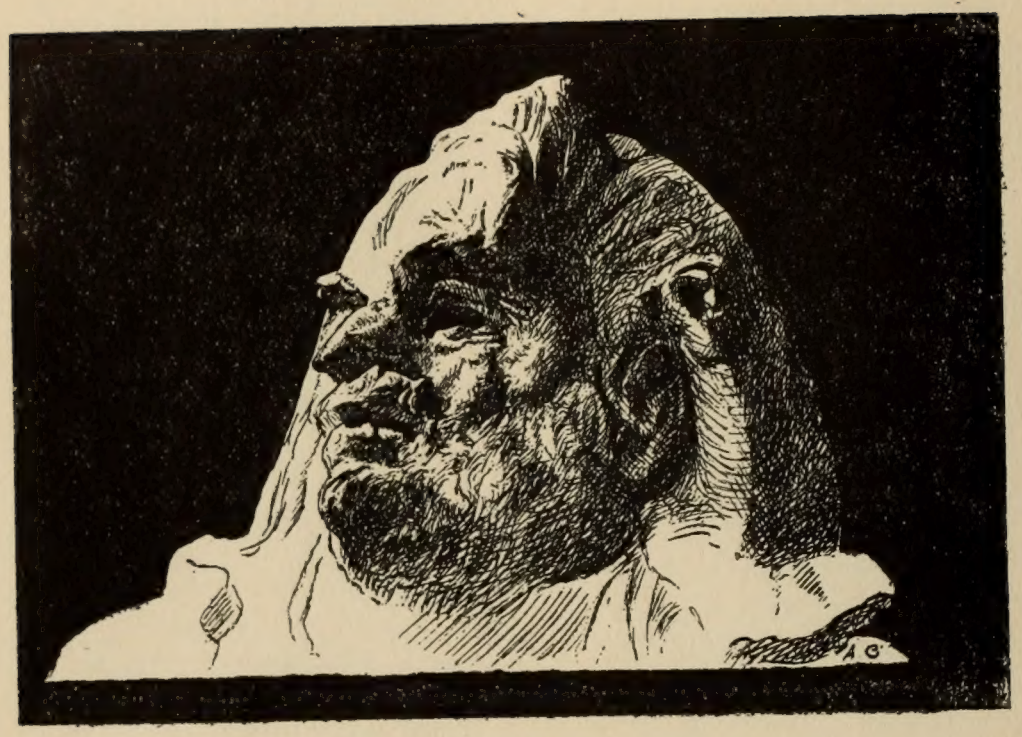
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MODERN ART





RODIN. HEAD OF THE BALZAC



RODIN: FAUN AND NYMPH
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

MODERN ART

IN RELATION TO A
NEW SYSTEM OF AESTHETICS

BY

KARL WILHELM GRAEFE

FROM THE GERMAN BY

FLORENCE SIMMONDS

AND

GEORGE W. CHRYSTAL

VOLUME I

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1908

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ERRATA

Page 219, line 25, *for* "were" *read* "was."
,, 228, line 1, *for* "Manet" *read* "Monet."
,, 240, line 34, *for* "Mirabeau" *read* "Mirbeau."
And in footnote *for* "Déroit" *read* "Détroit."

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COLOUR IN SCULPTURE

FROM JEAN GOUJON TO CARPEAUX

> Notre sculpture, pour être expressive,
> n'a jamais été bien tranquille.
>
> PH. DE CHENNEVIÈRES.

We find in sculpture the same evolution we have observed in painting. Here again we see the movement of a huge, many-limbed body, and the extremities of the unwieldy mass are so far in advance of the rest, and have been so greatly modified on the new road, that they scarcely belong to the body from which they sprang.

Here, even more emphatically than in painting, the nineteenth century was the decisive period. Whereas in four hundred years the solution only advanced by millimetres, our era has covered, with one bound, the important interval by which painting had gained on the sister art.

The development was further retarded by the fact that interest in sculpture declined proportionately to its increase in painting. When the cohesion of the arts relaxed, painting was able to become an independent thing. For the moment it was the more prosperous; it changed its original function completely; indeed, it became almost a new art, which apparently possessed not only all the earlier qualities, but had superadded so many others that its variety was dazzling. Sculpture, on the other hand, could only lose by the revolution. It had no part in the new uses which were so favourable to painting, but remained an alien thing, unpopular, because unadaptable to the dwelling-house, by nature unpractical, non-portable, and costly.

This, indeed, saved it, protecting it from over-refinement, in design as in technique, but at the same time depriving it of the genius which had made it pre-eminent in the golden age of art. It was susceptible neither of the benefits nor of the dangers due to strong individuality, which was perpetually removing all landmarks in the other arts. Since the days of Michelangelo there has been a great deal of talent but little genius in sculpture. It followed obediently in the wake of architecture long after painting, which was in advance by all that Holland and Rembrandt had given. Even Carpeaux' Amoretti on the beautiful Pavillon de Flore bow to tradition, and the difference of period between him and the mightiest of those who made a temple of the Louvre, Jean Goujon, seems less than that which divides the contemporaries, Fragonard and Delacroix.

When architecture ceased to develop artistically, sculpture was somewhat at a loss to justify its existence; at times it found itself in the painful position of a naked lady among fashionably dressed gentlemen!

This is the part it continues to play in Germany, where, raised on high on its lonely pedestal, it retains its majestic attitudes, while tram-cars jingle below, and things very different from those it is in the habit of immortalising are going on around it. It was finally obliged to don the uniform of the military memorial, as the alternative to complete effacement from the life of the nation.

In France it fared better. In Dalou we still discern the style of the city that prayed to Louis XIV., and in the smallest reliefs with which Desbois decorates his pewter bowls there is a whisper of the lofty language Puget spoke. Artists had style in the blood when they no longer saw it before their eyes.

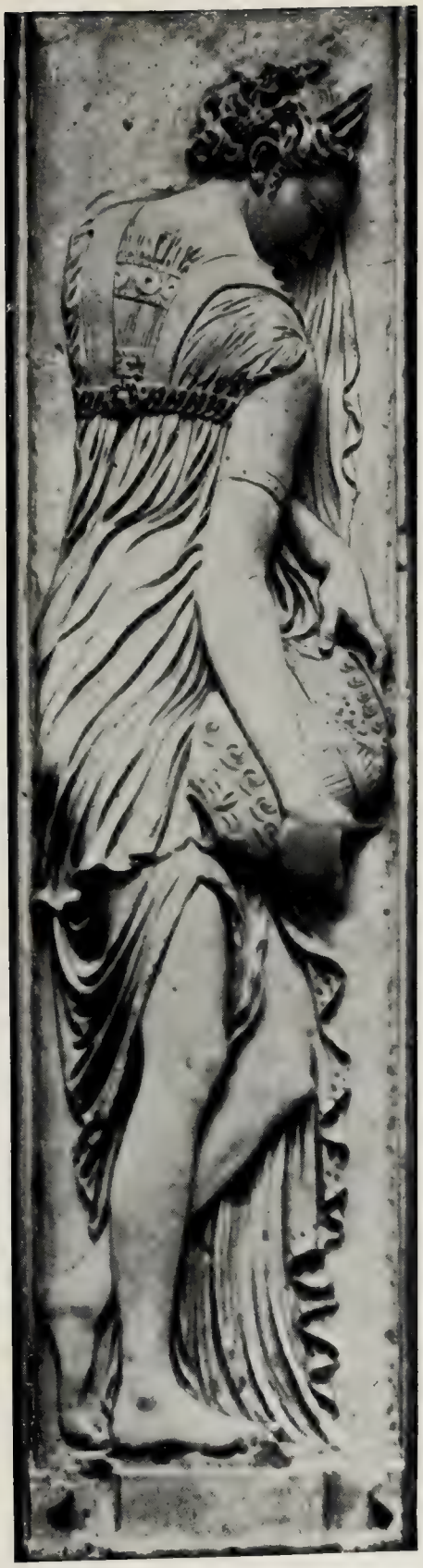
There had been danger here when classicism threatened to overcome the supple form of Pigalle, Falconet, Houdon, and Clodion, who had perhaps given a more exquisite as it was certainly a nobler image of Watteau's age than the great painters. They had escaped the perils of the Baroque with extraordinary tact. Clodion's drawings justified the strongest misgivings as to his sculpture, and yet how cautiously he avoided extremes here. Houdon especially, the creator of the colossal *San Bruno* in S. Maria degli Angeli in Rome, and also of the slender *Diana* in the Louvre, conceived the " noblesse oblige " of his age with great depth and distinction. His *Diana* is almost as stately as Goujon's *Diana with the Doe;* its loveliness is free from the ostentation which oppresses in many works of Goujon's and the later sculptors ; the naked body has a grace and modesty above all sensuous beauty.

Here classicism found nothing to regenerate ; it could only destroy a highly cultured Grecianism, which the Baroque style had not enslaved, but crowned. Its disastrous influence was the more certain, inasmuch as the instrument of this soi-disant classic intention was a David.

The definitive expulsion of the Baroque approximated to the annihilation of French sculpture, a negation of the most glorious records of French history, the destruction of a deeply rooted individuality, which had once distinguished the French from the Italian Renaissance, in spite of the dependence of the one on the other.

Rude frustrated the attempt. He reacted with a gigantic energy which thrust aside the intermediate links between Germain Pilon, Goujon—nay, Michelangelo himself—and laid a new colossal foundation for future development. It was the same force that manifested itself in the appearance of Delacroix, who had likewise given the highest expression to the reaction against David by a return, not to Fragonard, but to Rubens. The relief on the Arc de Triomphe sounds like the battle-yell of the ancient Gauls. We can understand why Thiers, Rude's patron, refused a group the artist had designed for the summit of the Arc de Triomphe, fearing diplomatic complications.

Barye toned down this furious passion. He introduced a milder measure, more suited to the age ; the genius of this correct person, more like an accountant than an artist, is more apparent in his incomparable drawings than in his well-modelled animal sculptures. Delacroix helped him, but the result was absolutely novel ; he knew how to organise the fugue in design, and how to give it form much more concisely than his greater friend, and for this he used colours we should expect to find anywhere rather than in the work of a sculptor. When sculptors become colourists in their drawings they generally look like officers in mufti. Barye's pastels are among the loveliest fairy-tales of modern colour, and foreshadow no less an artist than Degas. On paper, he models his animals in small, in their splendid velvety coats ; his lionesses are more akin to a magnificent striped





JEAN GOUJON: RELIEFS ON THE FOUNTAIN OF THE INNOCENTS, PARIS

Angora cat than to the beasts Delacroix drew; it is a pleasure to watch them crunching a human being! And yet they are wonderfully lifelike!

Barye's pupil, Carpeaux, returned to the Baroque manner. Sculpture in his hands became more animated than it had ever been in the eighteenth century on a similar scale—more animated not only in action, but in the mass. The *Ugolino* in the Tuileries Gardens, the first important work by the master of *La Danse*, designed by the youthful "Prix de Rome" at the Villa Medici, horrified the Director by its divergence from all the laws of well-disciplined smoothness. It was the *Massacre of Scio* in sculpture, exemplifying the axiom of Carpeaux' great successor: "La Sculpture, c'est l'art du trou et de la bosse."

The *Ugolino* was no solitary essay. It was the beginning of that system of deep hollows Carpeaux applied to his material. The group already mentioned, on the pediment of the Pavillon de Flore, when closely examined looks like a combination of deep clefts; Rubens might have modelled the angels. The work recalls yet another great name. Daumier's drawing in the Calais Museum, the *Procession of Silenus*, has the same exuberant carnality.

With certain reservations we may call this tendency a pictorial one, because, as manifested in our time, it was obviously inspired by painters; by Watteau, to whom his compatriot Carpeaux raised a statue at Valenciennes, and by all the others who made the play of light in pictures an important element of their art. But this pictorial tendency is complex, like all modern artistic elements. It belongs in reality in the deepest sense to sculpture, which, in borrowing it from the sister art, only took back what it had given it in ancient times.

When painting ceased to content itself with material colour and outline, it had perforce to encroach on the domain of sculpture. It simulated relief, instead of confining itself to the decoration of the flat surface, as the mosaicists had done. When Giotto decorated his Campanile with reliefs, he was hardly conscious that he was working in a medium other than that in which he had created his frescoes. If we turn to the beautiful relief under the superb *St. George* of Or San Michele, which seems to ripple like a smile over the surface of the marble, we shall note a tendency even more pronounced to paint, as it were, with the chisel.

But we shall have to go back still further to find the point of departure of the two arts. Perhaps the Egyptians called the characters they cut on the Pyramids sculpture, and the signs they wrote painting. Nothing would be more natural than that relief should be developed from the carved inscription. But painting has no right to arrogate to itself that which makes the beauty of the bas-relief. We might as reasonably describe that which we call picturesque in a metaphorical sense, as plastic.

The truth as to which of the two arts this quality belongs lies in the mean. Both have the same end in view, the effect produced by light. The architect of the ancients, who was neither painter nor sculptor, but everything, placed his ornament where he wished to give animation to his surface; and the decorator aimed at distributing light by an arabesque more or less vigorous, reproducing the large effects of the architect on a small scale. Such was the most universal aim of these arts, of course in their material aspect only.

The more architecture, the nerve of their common being, declined, leaving the two auxiliary arts to independent development, the more the line of division between them tended to disappear, and the more energetically did both strive after the object of their common aspiration, light. Sculpture was no longer a filling for an empty

space destined to receive it, a space to which it could give stronger effects of light and shadow than could painting. The *Ugolino* creates reliefs and hollows in his own body, places his children around him in the guise of an individual, fantastic architecture, and treats every particle as a whole, as he would himself have been treated by earlier creators. The guiding principle which the architect recognised in a high conception of the laws of space found a parallel in a freer and no less valuable axiom, a sense of the nature of light and shadow in a thing existing for itself alone. The study of the naked body in brilliant light is the best education he can have.

The doctrine seems as old as Greek plastic art. It is in fact one with it; what has changed is Nature. The models which showed Phidias the natural ease of accustomed nakedness are no longer attainable. The world has grown uglier, and not only in models. It seems as if all architecture only existed to deceive us concerning this ever-increasing ugliness. The outlook is horrible. If we had not the evidences of earlier human beauty before our eyes, our deformities would not prevent one of us from accepting himself as an Adonis. But Phidias, Scopas, and Praxiteles forbid it. Even when the Renaissance discovered the ancients, the change must have made men wonder.

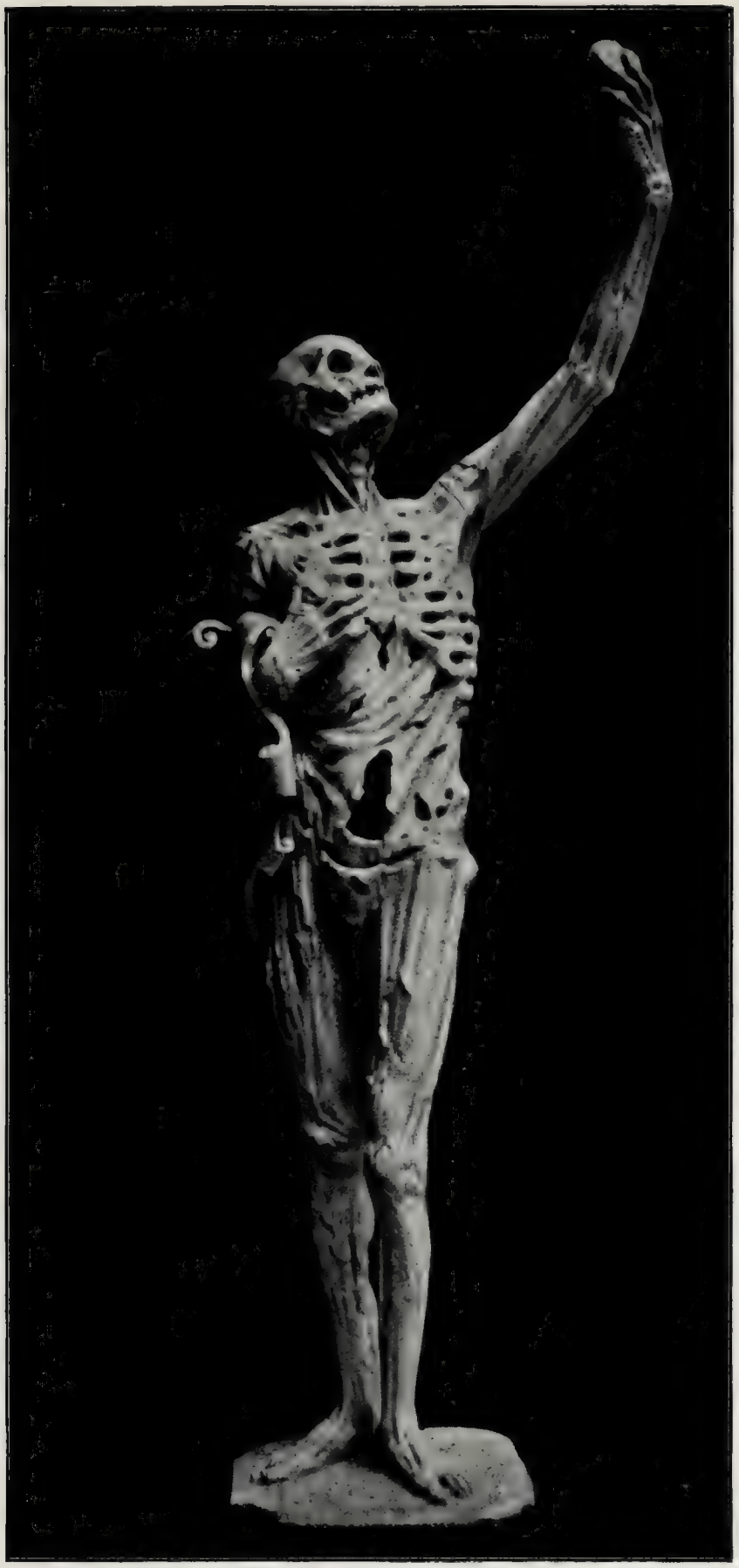
There is one comfort. It is not only the beauty of these bodies, but the art in them that charms. The Greeks were distinguished, not by their beautiful noses, which many of their statues have lost in the course of centuries, but by their organism.

And now an eager search for organism begins. David d'Angers, Pradier, Rude, Carpeaux, Falguière, &c., each after his own manner, seek the strongest organism, the conception of Nature most favourable to the play of light according to their respective ideas.

This was the difference with the Greeks: they knew where to seek; their efforts were directed by the life they led, a life which impelled them to represent the nude. When men began to clothe themselves, and architecture, doing likewise, came to the fore, it determined the goal. Now we have neither the one nor the other; we depend on the goodwill of the individual, and each individual attempts to give us something different. There remains but one common goal for the few who concern themselves at all with artistic endeavour: to get as much light in the surface as possible. To achieve this end, it is permissible to make up figures of hollows. Daumier's *Ratapoil* has become our Aphrodite.

And even if, in the place of *Ratapoil*, we take some no less logical but more serious beauty, the development is fundamentally the same. Sculpture has become uglier than it ever was, and has increased in vigour proportionately. Rude's yell would have been hissed in any other age. It is a very robust art, akin to the painting of Cézanne and of Van Gogh; stronger than Puget's two giants who support the balcony of the Town Hall at Toulon, for the group on the Arc de Triomphe carries nothing but its shriek, and yet it makes the effect of a mass. Carpeaux, too, is more robust than kindred artists in other ages. How much more vigorous are many of his portraits than Houdon's little *Voltaire!*—Voltaire was all wrinkles, a rich field for the play of light, and Houdon managed to make him quite smooth, once even without his wig.

But there is something strangely poignant in this smoothness; it recalls another stone skull that gleams from a niche in Rome, crowning a colossal figure which has no hollows at all, only a few gigantic, flat, yet luminous folds in the drapery—that creation of a lofty mind, San Bruno! . . .



L. RICHIER: FIGURE OF DEATH
CHURCH OF ST. PIERRE, BAR-LE-DUC
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

Before this statue we feel as we do before Poussin's copy of the *Nozze Aldobrandini* in the Doria Gallery. Involuntarily these Frenchmen become contemporaries. We seem to be almost tangibly in contact with the greatest of human creations; the breath of a divine era passes over us. How discordant is the shrieking present in comparison! What does it profit us that it lives? Life seems a small matter in a creation. Is not this quieter existence, in which the resurgent divinity slumbers, a thousand times more vital?

Slowly the grim ghost of the *Ratapoil* sinks into the depths, and we say with le Roi Soleil: "Otez moi ces magots!"

* * * * * * *

The difference between the Baroque of Carpeaux and that of Houdon is the Attic element in the master of the *Diana*, an occult form in the forms, which can only be described as Greek. It enabled him to resist the seduction of rippling lively planes, and to sacrifice animation in detail to that complete and quiet contour which permits us to view the work from any point, and never lets the spectator come too near.

The relation of the nineteenth century to the eighteenth has a parallel in that of the great sculptor of the seventeenth century, Puget, to the master of the French Cinquecento. Puget was also a painter, and he was always tempted to paint rather than to chisel his forms. Goujon, on the other hand, was an architect, like the Gothic artists, and when he designed his Diana with the deer he was governed by that idea of the common home of all the arts which gives such regal dignity to his female figures for the Fontaine des Innocents.

This Greek element, which we shall also find in French painting down to the present day, has been the guiding principle of French sculpture from its birth, and it may fairly be said that it has only been really happy, and has only shown the generous quality we love in French art, when its masters have had the lofty art of Athens before their eyes or in their minds. Indeed, even in Gothic art, when as yet there was no conscious thought of the ancients, we seem to trace this lofty classicism. Reims Cathedral is full of thirteenth-century figures in which the spirit of Greece seems to slumber. This Grecianism tends to a very different and far more powerful development than that of Italy, which grew out of the style of Phidias. In the remarkable female figure with the mantle and head-cloth, on the north door of Reims Cathedral, we seem to recognise a structure as mighty as in the pre-Phidian sculptures, and we ask ourselves wonderingly why this force did not in like manner become a source of native development. "Such figures," says Gonse, "show what France was doing two hundred years before Donatello. In sculpture, as in architecture, France was then the mistress of Europe." *

The claims made by Viollet-le-Duc and his successors to this style as the national language of France, and their rejection of the term Gothic as applied thereto, are perfectly justifiable. They attacked the Romanism of the academics with equal energy. Viollet-le-Duc opposed the "civilisation sympathique" of the Greeks to the "civilisation politique" of the Romans. He demonstrated the vast superiority of Greek to Roman architecture with irresistible logic, and traced the connection between the art of mediæval France and the Byzantines, with whom he felt himself more in sympathy than with the ideals of the Renaissance. It was the same spirit which inspired Morris and his circle in England, but in the Frenchmen there was further the Greek spirit from which we expect new

* "La Sculpture française," Paris, 1895.

achievements. In all the more modern works of French writers on their native art we note, at the sore place where the Renaissance begins, an ill-concealed chagrin. Corroyer, who in his excellent studies on Romanesque and Gothic Architecture traces their close relation to each other and to the antique,* refuses to admit the French Renaissance into the same circle, and prefers to derive from the Flemings, who contributed to the development of Gothic, rather than from the "Italians" of the time of Michelangelo. From many an architect who studied under Viollet-le-Duc we may learn how thoroughly this patriotic artist understood the heart of his people.

No one can fail to respect his somewhat narrow prepossession; indeed, it is easier to over-estimate such an enthusiasm than to tolerate the eclectics, who turned their backs on Viollet-le-Duc's wholesome doctrine because they were incapable of rising to his level.

It was necessary to surpass him. Who would willingly sacrifice all the beauty we should lose if we could dispense with the French Renaissance? Perhaps that is the higher patriotism which sees in the movement that took place in France at the end of the fifteenth century a thing necessary and inevitable, with which we have to reckon to-day as had the artists who, when they contributed to the Renaissance, carried out not only their own wills but those of other forces. The only essential point is how they acquitted themselves. Sometimes it seems as if Gothic art had never died, as if Michel Colombe had only found a new form to celebrate the spirit of his fathers when he carved the tomb of the Duc de Bretagne and Marguerite de Foix in the cathedral of Nantes. And if the whole wealth of the new style reveals itself in the monument of the two Brézés in Rouen Cathedral, once more the old seems to be crowned by the new. All the splendour of the pillared structure, with its truly Goujonesque figures, serves but to glorify the naked corpse on the sarcophagus, which only the heir of Gothic masters could have made so deeply impressive.

This expressive power had to make use of milder forms in a less strenuous age, and here again the flexibility of the national genius tended to the discovery of its more characteristic manner. The Renaissance might demand indulgence even if it had only served to show the French the primitive style of their Muse—what I have ventured to call their Grecianism.

Call it what we will, this higher consciousness of style, which makes the mysterious primitive genius of the race perceptible in all the changing forms of the day, never died out in France. It has always prevented delight in colour from degenerating into extravagance, both in the painted and the sculptured image.

* "L'Architecture Romane," 1888, and "L'Architecture Gothique," Quantin, Paris, 1891. *Cf.* also Anthyme St. Paul, "Histoire monumentale de la France," Hachette, Paris, 1884.



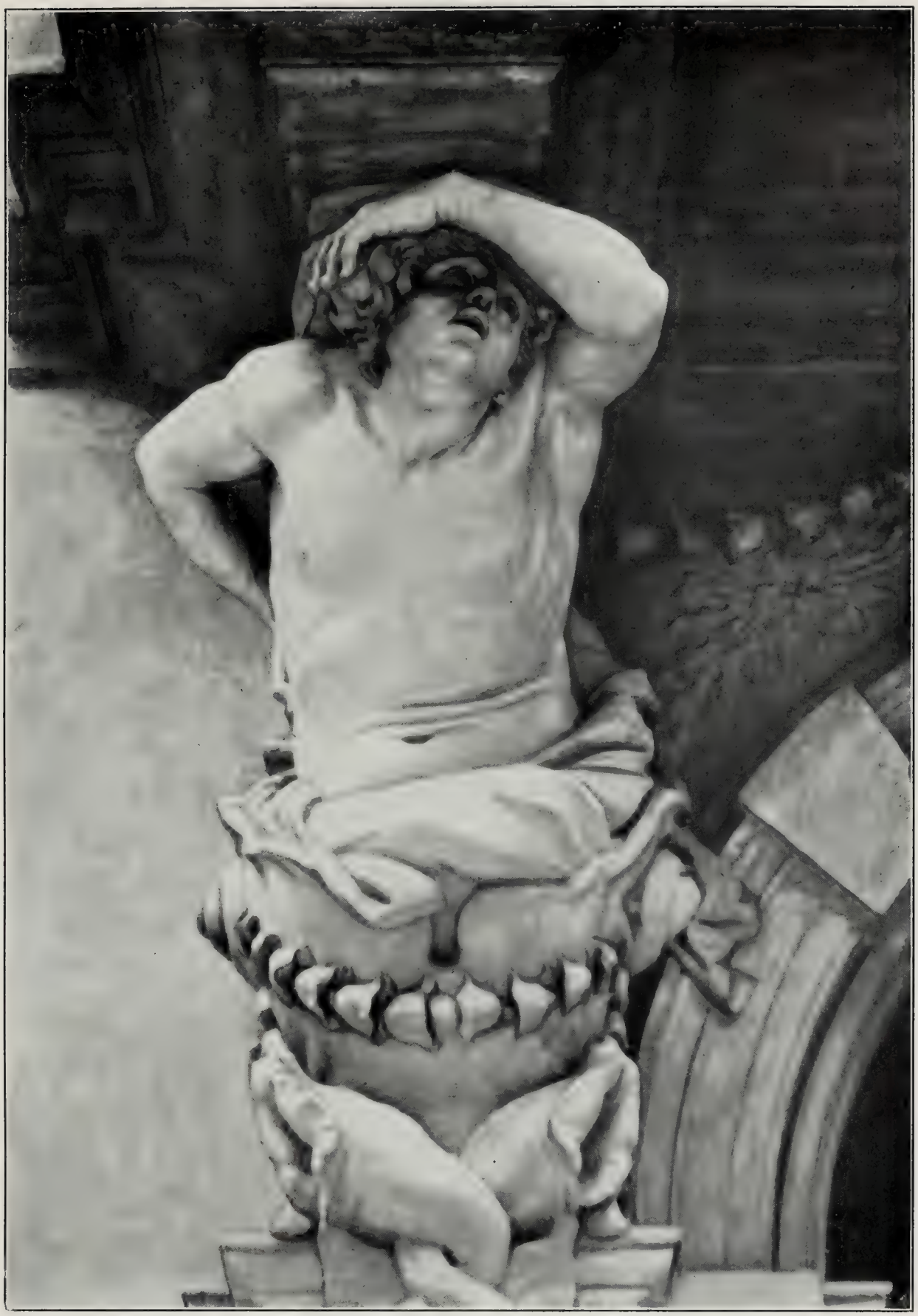
GERMAIN PILON: THE THREE GRACES
LOUVRE, PARIS
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET



CARPEAUX. SKETCH FOR THE UGOLINO



RODIN. FIGURES DU PURGATOIRE



PIERRE PUGET: CARYATID ON THE TOWN-HALL AT TOULON

AUGUSTE RODIN

J'ai fait cela ainsi, parceque
je l'ai vu dans la Nature.
RODIN.

MICHELANGELO and Rodin are congruous phenomena, but this parallelism is not determined so much by the obviously kindred elements as by the mysterious destiny common to their arts. The later master is certainly the weaker of the two, yet not as a personality, but as the product of his age and country. The world is three hundred years older, and proportionately richer—that is to say, fuller, more complicated, and consequently less vigorous. The will is the same—indeed, it has perhaps gained in intensity—but it is as intent on internal things as was that of Michelangelo on externals, in comparison with our art. It aims from the small to the great. Or rather, space has become so circumscribed in the world that art must be content to essay the effects of the ancients with a fragment of their means.

This fragmentary quality springs from the same root in each, and harmonises with the other relations between the two. In the case of Michelangelo, it was excused to some extent by external conditions, such as his wrath with the Medici and Julius II., who spoilt the Moses, and by the political misfortunes, which interrupted his Florentine labours. Rodin, too, had his moments of tribulation: the refusal of his first piece, *L'Homme au Nez Cassé*, by the Salon Jury; after some years of arduous labour again, the intelligence of critics who accused him of having cast his *Age d'Airain* from nature; and finally, towards the close of the century to which he had given its greatest sculpture, the stupid insolence of the Société des Gens de Lettres who scorned his *Balzac*.

But were not these irritations perhaps beneficial after all: safety-valves, which helped to save from the deeper tragedy of internal conflict; fortunate pin-pricks spurring the victim to resistance?

Michelangelo found a point on which he could lay firm hold, an order for which he was able to substitute another. His successor hovers in mid air, and even if he had the strength of the giant who raised the dome of St. Peter's, he could not repeat the experiment. All his strength only serves to increase the disorder of the age which has produced him. His very wealth makes his insufficiency. His genius will drive him from form to form, and at best he will sink down there where he should have begun in order to reach his goal. His destiny resembles the prancing horses that rush forward from the pedestal of the splendid monument at Nancy, snorting with ardour and with the fury of their course, and ever urged onward by the genius, who, his gaze turned away from the direction they are about to take, stares heavenwards to the light that dazzles them.

Rodin has essayed every path on which artistic instincts have travelled, and on some of these has come to the same issue, which many tendencies in modern

painting have sought and found so successfully that we almost might believe we had reached the utmost limits of art, of the moderns. Is there not but one solution to all the riddles? That our age has no longer the desire of former periods to avoid extreme consequences. With the magic word Nature it extends to all boundaries, even those of the unnatural.

On the way thither, and especially towards the end, there are sublime moments.

There is an early Greek Rodin of the first decade of the Phidian century, an Egyptian one like the faces found in tombs on the Nile, which look like modern portraits. He is to be found in the drawings of the middle period; for instance, the head of St. John, which he repeated so often, where the eyes are black holes, as in the old bronzes, and yet look at us with the utmost intensity, because the whole face is governed by an admirable plastic law; or in those little figures which the Greeks made in bronze, but which Rodin often left in plaster, that the delicate language of the limbs might not be exposed to rough hands.

In the monument to President Lynch he has all the nobiltity of a North Italian equestrian statue of the early Renaissance. This air of distinction is also found in many of his male busts. In *Le Baiser* he seems to simplify Michelangelo. In the *Eve* he continues him. The French Renaissance proclaims itself in details of the *Porte d'Enfer*. The Angel of War, stretching threatening wings and arms into the air on a lofty rock, reminds us of a rejuvenated Rude; the old woman, *Celle qui fut Heaulmière*, recalls Daumier, who is still more strongly suggested in many drawings. In others Ingres makes himself felt. The *Bourgeois de Calais* are humanised Gothic; his portraits of women the purest expression of gentleness in the midst of pride that the sculptors of the eighteenth century could have allowed a modern sculptor to produce. In the little studies of movement in marble and bronze, *L'Amour qui passe*, *La Fille d'Icare*, *Eternel Printemps* and many others, he seems to personify the convolutions of French Baroque of the finest period; but Rodin's Baroque seems to have taken over only the poetry, the tenderness, the sweetness of the mock pastoral age, without an atom of its typical form.

Finally, in his *Balzac* and kindred works he completed Carpeaux.

Thus the development of genius in all ages shows itself in a single personality. And the wonderful part of it all is that it is only Rodin one enjoys. His is not the thin, decorative manner of the perennial clever artist of our day, who moves us by reminiscences. Here we have nothing of the antique form, nothing that could have been the work of the ancients. All is Rodin. He has not reached his development in due historical sequence, but has the power to bestow his gifts upon us after the manner of a Greek, of a Renaissance master, of a Frenchman of the eighteenth century simultaneously, bringing the charms of all periods together in a single work.

Rodin is no stylist; he is less so even than Michelangelo, much less so than Goujon. He conceals the division of masses, for which his predecessors involuntarily made use of a remnant of mathematical thought, beneath the wealth of his forms. The effects are so numerous that those among them which make for rhythm complete the work imperceptibly. He naturalises the style of the earlier masters, so to speak. Where a Puget gets his result by emphasising the muscle, he puts the movement into the limb and gives the muscles only their normal relief, or he makes a single direction in flesh into a great many, and works with complex systems where his predecessors were content with a primitive



PIERRE PUGET: FAUN, TERRACOTTA
MARSEILLES MUSEUM
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

unity of form. His art, like every other—nay, more than any other—impresses by means of exaggeration, and the older he grows the more clearly he recognises this truth. Compare his *Age d'Airain* with the *Eve* of a few years later, or his *Baiser* of about the end of the eighties with the *Victor Hugo* of 1897, his *Antonin Proust* of 1885 with the head of Falguières of 1899, and note how the technique increases in breadth, becomes more and more penetrating, permeates the material more and more. But what he gains thereby by the suggestion of material he loses on the other side. The flesh is monotonous in *Le Baiser*, but who can give a thought to the flesh before this magnificent structure of limb? The conception of these lovers silences all other demands; from whichever side we contemplate them, they are instinct with the loveliest poetry, and an ideal beauty of lines, revealing only the divine elements of human passion. Compared with other groups, in which he multiplies his wealth of movement a hundredfold, and shows us attitudes of unimaginable grace, a tenderness of line which Ingres merely indicated in the form of barely visible arabesques on paper, *Le Baiser* may seem a solid, prosaic work; but the sublime calm with which we gaze here is lost when we approach the others. We stoop and twist to follow their beauties in all their curves and hollows; the poetry of these marble rhythms makes the gestures of the spectator an ugly travesty. It is not always possible to conceal the reverse of all this beauty. Painting may succeed in the task, as Fragonard has shown us. Imagine his bathing women in sculpture! Even in his pictures, skilfully as he conceals it, we are conscious of the impossibility of certain compressions of the limb which the convenient frame or the arm of a neighbour cuts off at the decisive moment. Such manœuvres are denied to sculpture. The arm which appears at a certain point must reappear at another, and threatens to quarrel with the leg with which it harmonised so deliciously at first. Rodin achieves the inconceivable in escaping this danger in some of his most daring essays, but this forces him to adopt arrangements of the utmost complexity. He has been reproached for his method of leaving large surfaces in the rough when he works on a mass of marble, and his critics have condemned it as a puerile straining after originality. Such strictures are barbarously ignorant. It is Rodin's very earnestness which impels him to what sometimes looks like trifling. What he does he must do. He needs the mountain in whose hollows the nixies dance; he is impelled to the amazing tours de force, which seem at times a kind of jugglery, in order to play his piece to the end. We may wrangle over his scenery, but that which is going on in the cavern is worthy of the magician; we never follow him without profit.

His magic breathes Nature, that is its strength. There is not a single detail in his work which is not the outcome of a natural impression. He repudiates the charge of literary sculpture vigorously; no reproach, indeed, could be more unjust. He has always seen what he represents, with a marvellous eye that seizes just the most unusual elements; he has never compromised, and his limitations perhaps lie solely in his inability to compromise. In his axioms, recorded in Judith Cladel's charming book, his boundless veneration for Nature finds continual expression.

"He who thinks himself greater than Nature, and imagines he can make it more beautiful, will never do more than juggle. It is not Nature that is imperfect, but the mind which so conceives of it. It is just as impossible to improve the human body as to transform an element. To alter is to destroy it. Such notions are due to the idealists. I am now able to admire Nature, and I find it so perfect that if God

asked me what it would be well to alter, I should say everything is right, and nothing must be touched," and so on.* It might be Courbet speaking.

But it depends upon what a man makes of Nature, his handiwork is everything; he must see and represent the thing seen. Before he went to Carrier-Belleuse, Rodin was a pupil of Lecocq de Boisbaudran. Young as he was—fourteen years old—Lecocq's teaching † gave him a basis he never lost, a rational manner of observing Nature.

"If I lay my hand flat on a stone," says Rodin to his pupils, "flat upon flat, I have the old unaccented relief; whereas, if I do so"—resting his wrist on the stone and spreading his fingers in the air—"the hand appears in perspective, and gets value. If a sculptor does this, he is acclaimed a genius. All it really means is that he can see." ‡ This was the creed of the Renaissance sculptor. For Rodin too—for him more than for all others—modelling (le modelé) is the reflex of life. His work gains in richness as he grows older: this youngest of all artists looks upon youth with suspicion; no one works when he is young. He grows like a tree: in the beginning we admire the slender bole, and gradually it sends out innumerable shoots, a wealth of foliage, spreading out its mighty superficies farther and farther to the beneficent sunshine.

Thus he approaches the tremendous cosmos of his monument to Victor Hugo.

There have been three momentous works in Rodin's career, three stages: his *Porte de l'Enfer*, his *Victor Hugo*, and his *Balzac*.

The *Porte* was the audacity of youth, always hovering round the impossible, and mated in this case with an almost incredible energy. It was the impulse towards a great organisation of the enthusiasm he felt for the works of his predecessors in Italy and France, an immeasurable, unparalleled creation, with a thousand details in which the many-sided and episodic seems of more importance than great and powerful unity, the nerve of ripe creations. The work became almost his life. The first idea of it came to him in 1875; he has gone on toiling at it ever since. It is a work of youth, the source of the most varied studies, and in its completion will be the joy of the artist's old age. The scheme was such that Rodin could only distinguish himself by a brilliant treatment of details. For as a gate, as a concrete object, it has the immensity which makes it difficult to appreciate the Sistine wall-paintings of Rodin's prototype Like these, it is a welter of precious things, and one might spend one's life in bringing its various fragments into port.

The *Victor Hugo* is altogether different. Here the mystery of a thrice happy inspiration brought about the realisation of Rodin's loftiest aims. The gate will never be finished, even when it has at length been cast, for in addition to the hundreds of beauties that adorn it, it might just as well receive a hundred more. The *Victor Hugo* was finished at the moment that the marvellous attitude of the poet was conceived—the Zeus-like pose of genius, a great and clear expression, absolutely rounded and homogeneous in spite of the deep and many-sided impressions this work also makes upon the eye. The diagonal motion of the soaring whispering genius above the poet's mighty body towards the widely outstretched hand is decisive. Thus did Michelangelo create: a titanic synthesis, the creation of an idea, the suggestion of the manner in which a work of art arises. Rodin has made a profound symbol of this, of import far wider than his design, than the

* Auguste Rodin, pris sur la Vie (Paris, La Plume, 1903).
† I shall have more to say of this under "Fantin Latour."
‡ Judith Cladel, "Auguste Rodin," p. 40.



HOUDON: ST. BRUNO

CHURCH OF S. MARIA DEGL. ANGELI, ROME
REPRODUCED FROM THE CAST IN THE TROCADERO
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

significance of the personality to which he does homage, and even than the art he symbolises. It is the glorification of the mind, universal as the art of a Phidias, the glorification of the body. That such a "literary" idea could take form, losing nothing of the colossal significance inherent in such a symbol in this age of ours —the world that rules the world—that we can stand amazed before it, convinced, as we are convinced of the beauty of the world the Greek imagined—this it is which ensures immortality to the creator of this monument.

The skull is enthroned in this cosmos. It is no longer the small Greek head, the capital of the shapely column, but rather the centre, the mighty shrine of life, for which the subservient body is a mere pedestal. The Greeks stood or walked, and floated in space when they walked. This figure sits; in the attitude best adapted for the bearing of burdens, one leg supported and bent at an angle, the other stretched out, to give as wide a base as possible. So he creates, this deep-breathing priest of beauty. But creation stirs these limbs mightily. Round the head—a battle-field of thought—a cyclopean form hovers as genius, grasping the idea with a powerful gesture, and driving it into the poet's consciousness: the terrible, fruitful dæmon of conception, the frenzy of will, that enfolds the world. Behind the two appears the divine form of measure, of reflection—a Greek woman. The conflict is revealed in the poet's vigorous face: everything non-essential is silent, even gravity seems dead, that evolution may not be arrested. The hand is thrust out firmly, balancing the two powers, and groping for the nascent work. A miracle is wrought.

The man who could conceive such a thing may scorn all honours: he can withdraw from the world and from mankind; all humanity is within him. The genius who can give corporeal and comprehensible form to such a conception is divine, and, with that same expressive gesture with which the outstretched hand controls the elements, it quells the doubts that divide our homage between this beauty and that of tradition, and compels a voiceless adoration. Rodin can only be compared with Rembrandt.

* * * * * * *

Rodin represents his art as a result of nature, mathematics and taste.

I have dealt with the first of these three factors; it is the basis of the Hugo monument. But it must be understood that it is inconceivable without the other two, as indeed is any one of the three factors.

He often emphasises the mathematical element of his sculpture: this, and not the poetry of the invention, is the soul of his *Victor Hugo*. It obtains the space-effect by means of a cube with obtuse and acute angles set diagonally in space. The upper narrow side is formed by the kneeling genius. The outstretched arm gives the longitudinal direction, the draperies follow the corresponding parallel direction, and the end of the outstretched foot completes the cube, this being cut off by the base, which is foreshortened on the side of the draperies. The cube is, of course, irregular, but the fundamental directions are observed throughout, or indicated by decisive points. A system of parallel planes divides the form. The wonderful arc formed by the body of the kneeling genius runs in the same direction as the arm which supports the poet's head, and the shrouded leg. These three parallels lie in three different planes one above the other, outwardly brought together by the drapery, and losing themselves inwardly in a rich complexity of minute planes. As a result, the light flows in a marvellous torrent from the broad curve of the genius over the poet's head to the outermost hand, and also over the

other front portions of the group, playing among them with a rich variety of movement.

This symbolism, which paints the idea of the genius who enfolds the poet and urges him to creation with the purest medium of art, light, is irresistible. It gives the design a depth far beyond any significance built upon convention. We cannot think such lofty thoughts as this ; the spectator feels it flowing into him like some material thing ; an example that will live as long as the sun illumines it. There can be nothing more natural than such mathematics.

The Muse of Meditation behind the group is an addition which hardly seems indispensable to the composition. But it is most beautiful, more beautiful than the rest, to which it bears but a dreamy relation ; it is all pliancy, abundance, and masterly curves, where the other imposes itself with iron power. It might be a symbol of mourning grace, which always seems half-concealed in modern art, and has not a very audible voice. It is perhaps an embodiment of Rodin's third factor, taste.

Rodin's taste is in externals that of his times ; we will admit its limitations. But fundamentally it differs widely from the elements that make up contemporary taste. It is a result of admixture. The conflict between the stimulating divinity and the Muse of repose depicts the chequered fate of this inventor. Like Carpeaux, he has made thousands of drawings, which reveal the " Rodin intime " better than his axioms. They quiver with life ; they are nearly all studies of movement, not so much studies for a definite purpose as manual exercises, vehicles for throwing off impressions. The likeness to Michelangelo in the borders commissioned by Gallimard for his copy of the " Fleurs du Mal," and many other drawings, is amazing. But pain is more spasmodic with Rodin ; his drawings twitch like nerves, and the filling in of the outline with his marvellous aquatint washes seems to exist merely to give resonance to this inarticulate moaning of agony. In the magnificent *La Force et la Ruse,* reproduced in " L'Image," *—the galloping centaur, clasping the woman in a wild embrace—in the design for the cover of " Die Insel," etc., Delacroix' energy is out-distanced. Rodin is not more powerful, but he is more strenuous ; the spontaneous, simultaneous flight of the highest effects both of draughtsmanship and of thought is more astounding. Rodin presents gesture and deed at once, so to speak.

Still greater is the speech of the latest drawings, where complexity is discarded, and only a few lines, occasionally even a single one, give the exquisite contour. In his earlier days Rodin sought a single direction in ten feverish strokes ; now he draws a single line with all Ingres' certainty, and succeeds in giving this one all the quivering life of his earlier designs. There are outline drawings by him in which he absolutely suppresses light and shadow, after the fashion of the Japanese. In the majority he uses a few splashes of wash, or touches of chalk; Maillard has reproduced a marvel of this kind in his book on Rodin,† the three *Figures du Purgatoire*, graceful as the forms the Greeks painted on their vases, and so natural that I am tempted to speak of carnations in describing these few strokes on

* For September 1897, with an essay by Roger Marx on Rodin's drawings.

† Léon Maillard, " Auguste Rodin," Paris, 1897, so far the most comprehensive work on Rodin, with many fine illustrations. The *Figures du Purgatoire*, after p. 84 in Maillard, are not so perfectly reproduced at the beginning of the present chapter, unfortunately. There is a beautiful etching of the composition in Gustave Geffroy's " Vie Artistique," Série II. (Paris, Dentu, 1893), which contains an elaborate study of Rodin.



RUDE: FRAGMENT FROM THE GROUP ON THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

tinted paper. Involuntarily we recall the Three Graces of the Cathedral Library at Siena before this arabesque. If among the many wooers of the famous prototype those who have tried to come nearest to it have been just those who have failed most signally, here we find a living artist who has achieved a rhythm not similar, but of the same enchanting quality.

Rodin is one of those people to whom we may look for a multiplication of our material sum of forms. Even in these three figures on the paper, the lines, naturally as they seem to run, form a complex design, which out of the three figures makes a fourth embracing all three. The arms of the central figure, which rest on the other two, are continued in the outlines of these as if it were another body, and this new body is of captivating beauty.

This is also his method in space. It will be, of course, understood that the whole object of this method is to secure the compactness of the mass, which is the basis of all monumental effect. This Rodin had already sought on the principle of the ancients, when he drew the well-formed outline of his *Baiser*.

But he carried the principle farther. The ancients had considered the definition of limbs within their groups as no less essential than the contour of the mass. But Rodin suppressed this more and more. A fantastic pair of lovers kneel upon a rock, breast to breast, lip to lip; a deep emotion welds them together; their arms lie close to their bodies, their hands seem to melt into the stone, there is no aperture anywhere. To this end the bronze has been kept as soft as possible. Everything sharp and angular is resolved into yearning desire and soft abandonment; an exquisite patina overlies the forms like a veil drawn over the two. Thus in the penumbra of the studio, new, almost atmospheric bodies arise, in which the mathematical sense of the artist makes successful use of his fancy. We reproduce the seated figure holding her foot in her outstretched hands, *Le Désespoir*. Its compactness of form gives it a certain affinity to a beautiful vase, and it might almost serve to demonstrate that all beauty, even that of utilitarian objects, has a deep—as yet but dimly presaged—connection with the lines of the human body. Rodin, indeed, formerly designed vases for the Sèvres factory.

Here the quality Rodin calls taste enters upon its decisive phase. It drives him to conclusions in which the exact calculation of effects ceases, and restrains him when logic would lead him too far. "Taste is everything," he once said. "He who has a knowledge of sculpture or painting without taste will never become a sculptor or a painter. I have often found that my science could not carry me any farther. I had to set it aside and to trust to my instinct to arrange things for which reflection was insufficient.

"Strange to say, even the things which apparently belong purely to the domain of the exact sciences follow the same rule. A naval constructor who is a friend of mine told me that, to build a great iron-clad, mathematical combinations alone will not suffice. If the parts are not disposed by a person of taste, capable of modifying mathematics intelligently,* the ship will not be so good, the machine will be a failure.

"There are no hard and fast rules. Taste is the highest law, the compass of the universe."

But he added musingly, "And yet there must be absolute laws in Art, since there are such in Nature."

So speaks the modern.

* "Capable de déranger les mathématiques dans le juste mesure."

The world begins to dissolve. He finds nature, mathematics, taste. But even these conceptions become fluid. He prays to Nature, but what does faithful reproduction avail him? He must exaggerate, as did the ancients; but what is to be the standard of this exaggeration? Then he discovers mathematics like a rock in the ocean. Here is peace. When figures speak their grave language, passion must obey in silence; here is Eternity, existent before man; the first who produced art bowed to this stern mistress. We must go back to science. "But," objects the doubter, "back? Can science ever go back? What did the ancients really know? They used figures, because they lacked emotions; they measured the universe, we live with it; they built pyramids, because they could prove their immortality in no other way. This was the reign of gross matter; we have discovered a substitute for material. They made mountains, we have learnt to create men. And not only the beauty of man. We have conquered a knowledge before which beauty and ugliness are as differences of temperature; we stand outside of every scale; we want life."

And life begins to seethe tumultuously, Egypt and Greece disappear in the waves; instead of the smooth-limbed marbles of the past, strange and mighty elements tower before the artist's eyes. The deeper he penetrates into his material, the newer, the stranger, the more terrific do the images become. In all there is Nature, and all, as he desires, are subject to manifold laws; not one, but a hundred verities might be applied to them, without making even an ounce of radiant, irrefutable knowledge. In this chaos, wherein he believes everything and doubts everything, he takes his third quality, taste. It is the weakest of the three, and he takes it at the moment when he requires the strongest, to control the prevailing anarchy. He succeeds most admirably in showing the trinity, life, law, and dignity, in his works, giving to each, indeed, its highest possible expression: Rodin creates his *Balzac*.

* * * * * * *

In this sequence we may perceive how all pure knowledge is checked and called in question by the remnants of earlier knowledge. In art, as in other fields, anarchy is the result of the victorious struggle for consciousness, and its destiny reflects the history of all culture that vainly seeks to bridge the gulf between Schopenhauer's advice to deny nature, and Jean Jacques Rousseau's demand that we should be true to her.

In his *Balzac* Rodin struck out b oldly in the direction which he places above all others: Nature. It was the work of an honest man, beneficent as are all momentous works. Mathematics and taste retired modestly into the background.

A wholesome *débâcle* took place in criticism, letting loose torrents of ink. "La Plume" was one of the reservoirs. We turn over these pages of contemporary judgment, feeling that they are already ancient history. The unanimity of opinion is very striking; there was practically but one—that which the artist's friends upheld. The other, advanced by his enemies, was not genuine. The argument of the Society, that the statue was not a good likeness, was too grotesque to be long maintained.

This one opinion was best formulated by A. Fontainas: "A picture is finished, a piece of sculpture is complete, when the painter or sculptor, who has recognised and has curbed the causes of his emotion, has been able to fix the image thereof



CHAPU: DANCER, SILVER BRONZE

BONNAT COLLECTION, PARIS

with such energy on the canvas or in the clay that his emotion is partly or wholly communicated to the spectator." *

This formula covers most of the springs of inspiration. The *Balzac*, as Arsène Alexandre more briefly put it, was a "source d'émotion." †

This source was no trivial one. It did not stir literary emotions alone. Alexandre defends himself energetically against the charge of having been impressed by an allegory in the figure. Like Roger Marx, he sees the secret of the effect produced in the movement Rodin succeeded in expressing, and in this he was certainly right.

The *Balzac* is, in fact, the extreme consequence of a plastic method which used the Greek outline for a time without ceasing to be Gothic within, that was Gothic in order to show itself Baroque, and finally became Baroque to cast all fetters of tradition from it. The *Balzac* belongs to our age as does hardly any other work of art.

It follows in the way marked out by Rodin's *Victor Hugo*; the head has become everything in the most audacious fashion. In an image of the poet of "La Légende des Siècles" it was important to indicate the "voix intérieure et extérieure;" a third figure was even contemplated originally. The worker Balzac, who wrote the psychology of his times in the simplest prose, appears to Rodin without any accessories, a being who lived with his brain. And thus, in this simple aspect, he modelled him.

He might indeed have given the head alone; it exists independently, and is a brilliant creation. There are reduced examples, about the size of the skull which serves Hamlet for his text, and the soliloquy that might be uttered over it could be as pregnant as that other monologue.

I think it was Henri Rochefort, also one of Rodin's best models, who ridiculed the idea of concentrating the whole Comédie humain in a single head. That great maker of phrases was mistaken. This distorted face shows the heroism of the conqueror better than could any allegories. It is the only method of representation proper to our age: in those eyes that grow inwards, in the shreds and hollows of which this scarcely human face is fashioned, in the grotesque attitude, full of pride and sovereign disdain, the mask of this Caliban, and that which lay behind it, is painted. It is a fabulous symbol, it exaggerates that which should be exaggerated in this case. Ugliness, the proud result of conscious self-destruction, becomes a monument to beauty.

The rest is tame in comparison. The bare throat enhances the grotesqueness, but here it verges on the obscene; the effect is too crude. True, the terror of the conception is increased by the addition of a gruesome anatomy; we get nearer to the physiology of the abnormal, and divine all the physical deformity of this genius.

Here, at any rate, Rodin's "compas of the universe" was more unsteady than ever. We see the reason of the drapery; it was no mere makeshift. During the wearer's lifetime, criticism was wont to indulge in agreeable pictures of the immortality of this garment. Rodin's cruelty of conviction did hesitate to make a monument of the dressing-gown.

The error lay in the monumental character of the apparition. Its ill-success was not due to disparity of will and power. No artist worthy of the name attempts what he cannot do. Rodin has always achieved what he has desired, and this has

* "La Plume," July 1, 1900, extra number.

† Preface to the Catalogue of the Rodin Exhibition, 1900.

always been a great deal. In his *Balzac* he has given us all that rose before him; but that such a face should have been one of his dreams seems almost incompatible with the instincts of this man.

The question arises: what is to become of sculpture among all this willing and doing? It is as significant of our æsthetics as is the *Balzac* of our art, that among the hundreds of arguments for and against the work, not a single one should have attempted to answer this question; nay, more, that not one among the hostile critics—from these it would have aroused distrust—nor one among the friendly ones—from these it should have come—ever raised it, or examined the relative nature of this great effort.

There was one person in Paris whose neglect in this respect seems inexplicable, and whose opinion would have been the only one of real interest: Rodin himself.

The *Burghers of Calais*, one of his richest, most profound creations, presaged many things. It was his idea to set up this group almost level with the street, and he never forgave the municipal authorities of Calais for disregarding his wishes. The *Burghers* should have taken their places like other mortals among the living: "mêlant leur vie héroique à la vie quotidienne de la ville."* The moving story of these men seemed to him so important that he felt it ought to be quite natural to have their individual presentment close at hand.

Thus we see that he placed the significance of a national legend, a poetic, heroic tradition, above the art which creates a civic monument. He does not ask: How shall I place my work that the effect may be most favourable?—but, How shall I place this symbol that its symbolic effect may be most striking? For the stranger, ignorant of the town and its history, this question would become: How shall I startle people most?

It is hardly necessary to say that there was no puerile motive in this. Rodin's premises are purely artistic; he has no idea of giving a work characteristics that lie outside the domain of sculpture. His development does not come, as might be supposed, from the progress of his symbolism; it is the evolution of his artistic problem. But the use to be made of the work, the question what the layman is to do with it, for him belongs to the sphere of pure literary importance, which varies with circumstances in every generation, and hence can only be of a very superficial nature.

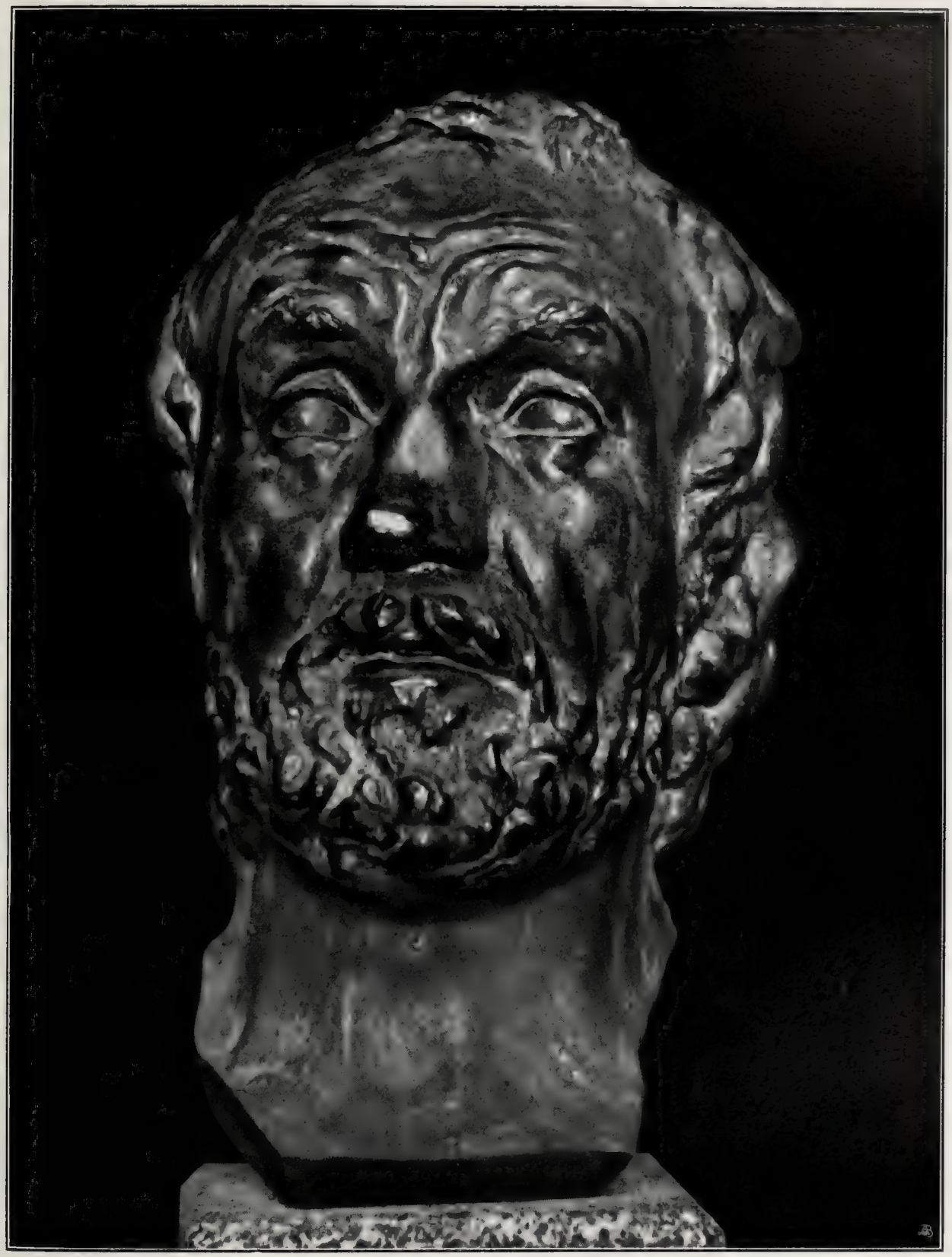
In face of this decisive conception, we are not concerned to inquire whether it springs from scorn or respect for fellow mortals. In either case, it is a wholly inexcusable defect.

No mention was made of it when, in 1890, the *Victor Hugo*, destined for the interior of the Panthéon, was declined for the enclosed space, but accepted for the Luxembourg Gardens. One criticism which dealt with the refusal opined that it was not Rodin's business to consider the architecture of the Panthéon, which indeed might be looked upon as a kind of gallery. It might pertinently have been asked on this occasion what sort of architecture Rodin ever did consider, and the indignant reply no doubt would have been that a genius does not need to conform to any kind of architecture.

This brings us to the point at once: Rodin's art is gallery-sculpture.

In this respect it does not differ either for good or evil from ninety-nine per cent. of all other sculpture, and an argument which is of general application must not, therefore, be used to its prejudice. I wished to suggest this when I defined

* J. Cladel, "Auguste Rodin," p. 81.



RODIN: THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE
(L'HOMME AU NEZ CASSÉ)
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

Rodin's third factor, taste, as the taste of his time. As such it works wonders; it has even enabled him upon occasion to solve certain problems imposed on him by architecture in the happiest manner. The pediments of Baron Vitta's house, where he was able to group his vapourous figures in a triangle, will not detract from his fame. But these are purely fortuitous exceptions. The lack of definite scope in this art, which seems suitable for any place, really circumscribes its potential uses. In these days it is true that the domain of sculpture, which can be enjoyed apart from architecture, is immeasurable, and Rodin's works which avoid the coarser discords, more than suffice for his immortality. Fate has determined that his tendencies should drive him beyond the limitations proper to his art. It is indeed hardly conceivable that so grandiose a personality, who embodies all the dramatic fervour of his race, should confine himself to a situation which robs his voice of all its echoes. His very personality, to say nothing of his art, compels him to the forum.

And then, again, the nature of this art shatters the glass doors of the cupboards which attempt to guard it. Its effects cannot be appreciated in a confined space. The broad technique of this Impressionism in the grand manner requires distance.

Yet if we place certain Rodins, the size of which makes them barely conceivable in an interior, in the open air, the tragedy becomes evident. The profundity of their conception, the beauty we divined, the force of expression, to which we were ready to sacrifice all other considerations, do not prevent them from becoming shapeless masses, which call in question the whole edifice of inspiration that surrounded them.

For there are eternal laws which even genius may not cast away, which even a Michelangelo cannot relax with impunity, but which Rodin disregards more than any one of his predecessors—nay, even seems to ignore altogether at times: laws of space which we moderns, whose eyes have been holden, since we have supposed we had learnt to see, can scarcely as yet formulate, and which some few among us first recognise when they turn vengefully against us.

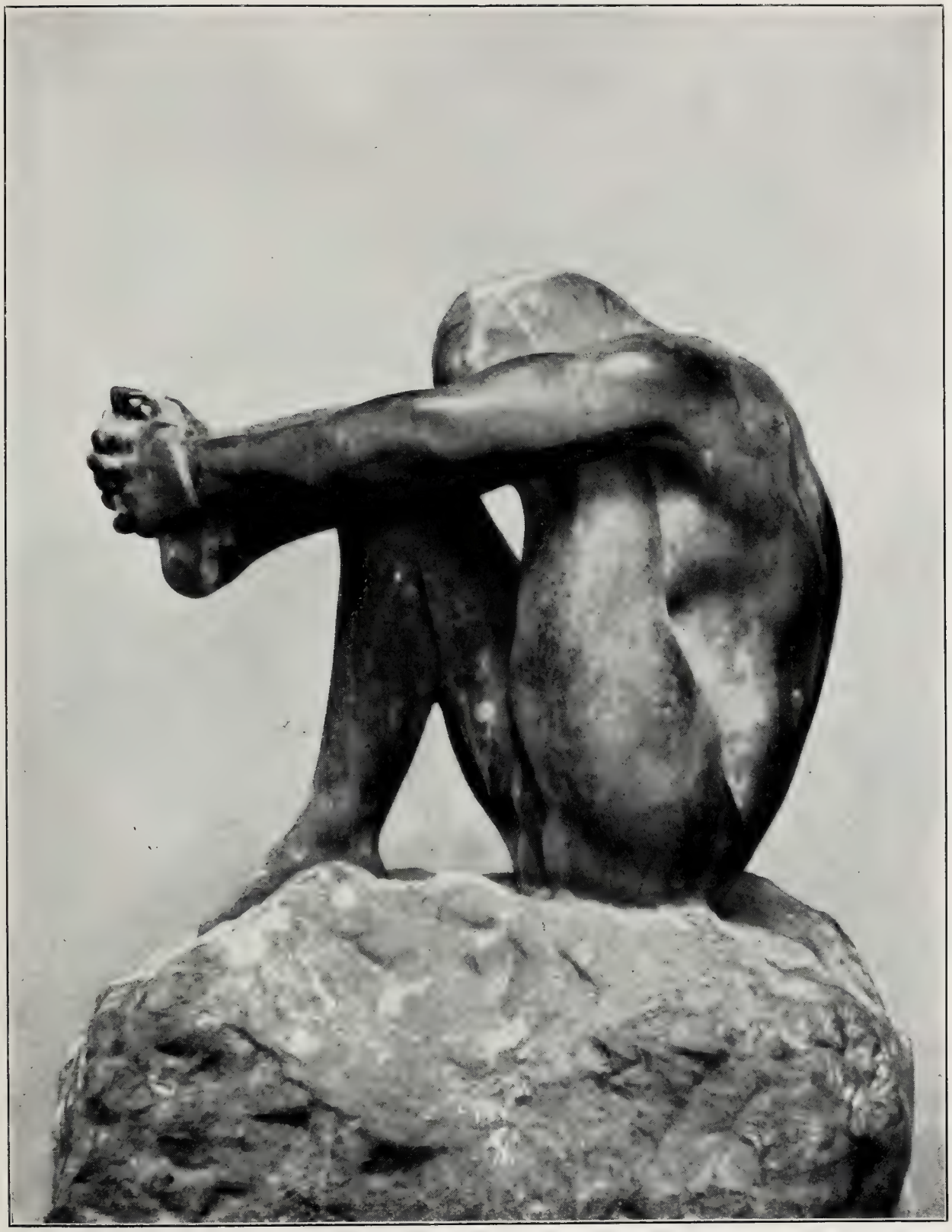
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Yet Rodin is immortal, even if we endorse his own opinion, that he by no means represents our possible degree of perfection; even if we believe in a further development that will go far beyond Rodin. For as surely as this will take place, so surely will his works have helped to bring it about. I shall try to indicate something of this, more especially in those passages which deal with new developments.

Perhaps Carrière foresaw this consummation when he wrote these beautiful words of his friend: "L'esprit généralisateur lui a imposé la solitude. Il n'a pu collaborer à la cathédrale absente; mais son desir d'humanité le relie aux formes eternelles de la nature."



RODIN. DRAWING



RODIN: DESPAIR (LE DÉSESPOIR)
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

MEDARDO ROSSO

The Italian Rosso is the Mephistopheles of this art. His example may have encouraged Rodin in the last phase of his structure of colour and light.

When I first visited his studio, and he saw the amazement his works aroused, he built up a little bit of art-history in the form of a singular still-life. He placed on a table a very fine bronze copy, made by himself, of the large head of Vitellius in the Vatican, beside it a wax after Michelangelo's small group of the *Madonna and Child* at Berlin, then a torso of Rodin's *John the Baptist*, and finally a work of his own, the *Head of a Child*. This he could not stand up, as it had no base; he was therefore obliged to keep it in his hand.

The Vitellius head is immense. It suggests the triumphal arches and amphitheatres which might have been made for men six times as big as those of to-day. Half a dozen of Rosso's child-heads might go into the Roman's skull. It is like a globe. The gross fat in which the face is buried conceals all trace of the anatomy; it is a mere mass; we can scarcely imagine the squalid colossus it crowned.

Beside it, Michelangelo's group seems full of grace and charm. It has a dignity undreamt of by the coarse Roman, which in these days would perhaps be called Japanese. The body sings with a thousand voices, where before there was only one droning trumpet sound. Everywhere where before there was an inert mass, a thousand movements have arisen, completing each other in rich antiphonies.

The mighty monsters who crushed to death all the small things that came in their way are no more, but we still have the uneasy feeling that, were they yet among us, their breath would blow all this charming play into nothing, that one motion of their ponderous bodies would mean more than the many-toned eloquence of all limbs the of their descendants.

The Rodin example perplexes the spirit which, conceiving itself to be on the right track from the greater to the less, involuntarily prepares to find the same relation between Michelangelo and the modern artist which it had established between ancient Rome and Michelangelo. In spite of the likeness between the two, the later development is in a new direction. It no longer insists so much on the many-sided elements, which in Michelangelo's work are, as we readily see, deliberately brought together into rhythm, but it connects the more important points d'appui of the skeleton by means of a surface animated in a more arbitrary fashion. We shall see the contrast even more clearly if we substitute a later work for this torso, the head of the *Balzac*, for instance. Then the old Roman head suddenly seems a dead thing, while life flashes from every line of the *Balzac;* on the one side is brute force, on the other sparkling intelligence—Goliath and David. The little Renaissance group, again, retires into the background, it does not share the difference between the Roman head and the *Balzac*, and achieves neither of the effects we have compared. It has a dwarfish look between the two. We note certain distressing details: the Madonna's hand which rests on the drapery lacks

fleshly reality ; the fingers are meagre, like the folds of the robe ; like all the rest, indeed, they are only present for the sake of rhythm and play of line. Every line in the furrowed face of the *Balzac*, on the other hand, is directed with obvious intention to the rendering of life, and belongs not only to the sculpture, but to the essence of the being represented, bringing the piece of breathing flesh before the imagination with a perfectly physiological suggestion of a body.

Rosso's head is also a piece of human life, but here the same impression, the vitality of which startles us in the Rodin, is achieved by quieter means : the light does not leap from point to point as in the *Balzac*, but glides smoothly along. The great differences of plane are avoided—not, of course, merely because of the difference of the model. What Rodin achieves with a keen incisiveness of touch, with depressions which slash the surface in every direction, Rosso arrives at by gradations which, if we see them aright, are even more impressive than the strong methods of the other, and allow of a relative peacefulness of surface which is very beneficent.

It is a quieter art, of great distinction. Rosso's profiles of women and children are among the noblest things of our day. They belong of right to an age when we flee from the tumult of the world to secluded rooms, and in the gentle light of evening turn for refreshment all the more eagerly to such tender things because of the coarse interests which have absorbed the day. All the work of the earlier sculptors seems material beside that of Rosso, especially that of the vigorous, brutal artists of ancient Rome. Even the superficial demands this latter makes upon us are greater, entailing more effort both for our legs and our sensations ; retreating to the right point of sight is fatiguing. A child's head by Rosso passes from hand to hand, and its gentleness seems rather to nestle into our emotions than to evoke them.

But if when we see the head of the Roman we cannot picture a body for it, because it would be too colossal for us, so with Rosso there are reasons directly opposed to this, which work in like manner against the conception of actual life for such a delicate profile. This art of the brain has no body.

It is characteristic of Rosso that this infant face, like most of his things, has remained in the wax, and is only a face, a mask. It would be too much for him to add the back of the head, and we are driven to doubt whether indeed this completion would be possible. The idea seems almost as strange to one here as in connection with the painted profile of a picture, before which no one dreams of looking behind the canvas to see if it could be carried further. And yet there is nothing non-organic in the face. It is as susceptible of life as the gigantic Roman head ; indeed, if this susceptibility increases with the greatness of the conception Rosso's fragment seems to have the advantage. In certain details, such as the slightly crinkled hair, the Roman head is not free from a pettiness of which there is no trace in Rosso, who, even in this little head gives no detail, but only broad planes. How hard and material the Greeks of the time of Praxiteles seem in comparison, chiselling not only the hair but the horses and sphinxes on the helmets of their goddesses. If the dictum of the painter that art is sacrifice holds good in sculpture as well, our contemporary's place is high indeed.

Rosso represents a great intelligence ; he is a man who has been able to free himself from all those hereditary conceptions which are wont to be sources of unconscious inspiration—perhaps because he never felt them as strongly as others —whose perceptions have perhaps been keener than those of any of his predecessors,

and who has had the courage to act upon them ; the only artist in our time who has not been depressed by compromise, and who deserves all reverence because he has perhaps sacrificed himself for others.

His art could only have developed in Manet's age, but it is perfectly independent. The famous phrase about an art all one's own finds its complete application only in him.

But it was no puerile megalomania which led him to sever all links with the past, no lack of reverence for the old masters. An insufficient knowledge of the past cannot be laid to the charge of the artist who has made the most beautiful copies of the antique and of Donatello *—bronzes which make one recognise the shortcomings of the famous Kellers, to whom the long corridor in the Louvre owes its reproductions. No one can have felt greater admiration for the wooden statuette of the priestess Toui in the Salle du Scribe of the Louvre, or can have looked at the supple white figure with the jar on its head with intenser vision. No one has understood as he has wherein lies the effect of those little seated divinities, scarcely a span high, which impress us as monumental. These things have left their manifest impress on his mind, making the Elgin marbles seem restless to him, and the favourites of his own people in the Belvedere trivial. Michelangelo seemed to him the representative of a decadence, and the French Renaissance revealed this decadence still more clearly to him. Throughout he noted the same disappearance of unity in favour of agitated limbs, which oppress the actual structure like superfluous ornament, and annihilate the broad, pure surface. It was only in painting that he recognised a different development. Even here he noted a diffusion, a loss of effect, as soon as he turned away from the Primitives. Leonardo's smile did not make up to him for the lack of structure in his female bodies. He preferred the drawing of Isabella d'Este to the famous pictures. In all the church pictures of the Italians he was disturbed by the insistence of the figures, standing out from the surface. These saints sometimes concealed an exquisite landscape, in which alone the artist had revealed himself, and they seemed altogether alien to this rich atmosphere. Raphael painted without any great compelling impulse, to please his patrons, he produced a medley of details, out of which any number of pictures might have been built up. Why this multiplicity, when a single form would have sufficed to give the sum of all the others? Could that be progress which, in defiance of all economics, distributed energy, and drove the spirit which should have aimed at the highest and sought the utmost concentration, to division, instead of guiding it to unity?

Such may have been Rosso's train of thought, and the man inured to hard necessities, who had pushed a hand-cart in Paris for daily bread, the homeless alien, bound by no conscious sympathy to his native land, and knowing only the most repellent aspects of Paris, was hardened against all vague compromise. As soon as he had enough to eat, he acted upon his own convictions. Then one day he lighted upon Velazquez, and in a moment he recognised the contrast offered by a commanding gravity to the loquacious play of limbs characteristic of the Renaissance. The blooming fair-haired child in her pearl-gray lace-trimmed frock seemed to him to reveal a greater art than anything in the whole Salon Carré. Greater, because more real, because this portrait of a princess suggests majesty in the sweep of its design, and not by any rhetorical flourish imposed by the patron ; because this naturalness which is combined with the proudest bearing, annihilated the

* There are some very fine examples in the two Rouart collections in Paris.

empty gestures of all predecessors, and could only be compared to that of the antique masters, whose power has been scattered and destroyed in the course of time. This artist drew inspiration from himself alone, and became the first of painters in the process, an unequalled master of his craft. His style was not an echo of other arts, of other forms, but a thing complete in itself, a creation of his brush alone.

Rosso found the same quality in certain of the Spaniard's contemporaries, in Rembrandt, at times in Rubens. But no one had ever so enveloped his figures that the eye can detach nothing from them, and that no atom remains which does not belong organically to the whole. Never since Velazquez had this art been attempted with like success. The others, the stylists, always got the upper hand. It was not until our own times that art, pondering the elements of Velazquez' originality, and that second *Anatomy Lesson* of Rembrandt's, which he painted for himself, evolved an original style. Turner went back to the atmosphere of Rembrandt's landscapes. Manet created a new art in portraiture. He went on from that point where Velazquez had left off two hundred years ago, and in spite of the superstitions which refuse to recognise any greatness in the art of our own times, he succeeded in giving us an irresistible expression of power, the work produced by a single effort. The centuries disappeared. That which the genius of all epochs had been unable to accomplish, an equivalent for the lost unity, was won by the intelligence of an age that needed no more gods. Degas painted his dancers as the Egyptians had carved their kings, giving nothing extraneous to the thing itself, and from this severity there shone a splendour like that in the pictures of the Chinese. It only remained for contemporary sculpture to follow in the same path and to learn from the painters of to-day what these had learnt from the sculpture of the ancients.

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The logic of this conception is of no ordinary kind. The knowledge on which it rests is superior to the tradition of earlier artists. These were atoms without knowledge. The artist of to-day strikes out his own path. Who can think lightly of the courage which calmly translates conviction into achievement?

But Art is not of the feminine gender for nothing; the paths by which one approaches her seem to lie remote from the highest spheres of the intellect. She mocks at the intelligence of the thinker, and throws herself into the arms of the frivolous being who happens to be born handsome. Great intellects are not for her, and can seldom obtain anything from her. The exertion necessary to overcome her is certainly of an intellectual kind, but it is remote from the icy eminences of pure personal consciousness.

Rosso has succeeded in creating sculpture which is like nothing else, not even sculpture. He reached the summit with his female heads. A beautiful wax profile by him in the Segantini Room of the Universal Exhibition of 1900 was like a tender muffled voice among fishwives, recalling the pure loveliness of Mino da Fiesole's brows.

The summits of art in these days are narrower than they were wont to be, and unfitted for prolonged repose. Rosso's was the edge of a sword.

He had perforce to step to the other side, and this one small step carried him beyond his narrow circle, among those who, fearing to fall, climb not; the catastrophe interests the hasty world in which we live merely as a fait divers,



RODIN: BRONZE HEAD

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

as one of the many accidents which happen every day in the unsteady structure of our art.

That which was more dangerous to him than Rodin was probably his race, or the dread of his race. The powerful figure with the fair hair and thick beard, the broad chest and strong workman's hands looks more Teutonic than Latin, and it is difficult to understand how tender is the soul in this body. He had some trouble in driving the Italian element out at first. In the *Gavroche* executed twenty years ago there lurks the contented triviality of the popular contemporary Roman sculptor; it is the highest degree of the cheap smile, which the emigrant Italian artist creates for his patrons. Yet this was already distinguished by the softness of the form. The later relief, the mother kissing the child, is not entirely free from the jarring note; the composition is not yet brought together, the silly smiling child seems all unconscious of the mother, who almost stifles it in her tenderness. But here he is already painter altogether, and we know at once of what category; at that time he might justly have been bracketed with Carrière, and not only because of the design. There was the same liquid, vaporous handling, making of the limbs absolutely dematerialised organs of tenderness, notably of those which come in contact with flesh, and recognising no fixed points in flesh, but only light and shadow.

The characteristic wax head, *La Rieuse*, was executed in 1890 or 1891. Rosso was then between thirty and forty, and at the zenith of his art. As a sculptor he still commands his medium, we still divine the full form under this tender treatment, and it is remarkable indeed that this tenderness should remind us of the great Primitives. Some six years later, naturalism had conquered him. The *Femme à la Voilette* * is a trifling with accidents. He has succeeded, certainly, in giving the space with which he wished to unite the figure; but this does not impress as a well-regulated cosmos, as it does in painting, but as an accidental addition, which neither gives nor receives the life that glances off it. The face is an enigma, but it does not impel the beholder to a reconstructive solution. The veil that shrouds it obscures not this alone, but art.

The limit beyond which delicacy melts into nullity is more favourable to the painter than the sculptor. Indeed, the painter's individual art begins where that of the sculptor ends. The veil with which the sculptor brings his figures together can only be of a palpable kind.

It was reserved for our age to fail to perceive that a fluid thing, the colour of the palette, the painter's medium, presents but one surface to the air, and to the eye of the spectator, whereas a solid body, the sculptor's material, has three dimensions, and can be seen on every side. The one is driven by knowledge of his material to be as fluid as possible, the other should aim at the greatest firmness. Rosso, no doubt, recognised the weakness in the modern evolution of sculpture, the loss of mass. He finds the same retrogression in painting. From this community of defect, he infers the possibility of a common remedy. Here is his mistake. Velazquez achieved the richness of his creations by a marvellous organisation of colour-division. He is quite untrammelled herein; indeed, the richer he becomes the more perfectly does he fulfil all the natural conditions of his craft. Rosso desires the same effects; but he can only replace colour by elevations and depressions, as long as he works on reasonable lines. But depressions make holes. He therefore reduces every elevation to the utmost, and

* Noblet collection.

suppresses every possible opening. This is the negative method. It leads, of course, to avoidance of the shortcomings of others, but it fails to carry out the natural conditions of his art. His sculpture becomes unsculpturesque to the same degree that Velazquez' painting becomes truly pictorial. One of his best works of recent years is the bronze portrait of Madame Noblet executed in 1896, a relief without a background, so to speak; in other words, the conventional flat surface of the background is replaced by fragments of the hair or a head-cloth—which of the two it is, is not apparent—which encircle the head wherever it stands against space, and melt into space. In the portrait of Mr. Trebeni of a year or two later—1900, I think—this attempt to replace the background of the relief is abandoned, but the execution is even more blurred. We might be looking at a miniature model of a furrowed mountain. The summit only, the forehead, is smooth; on each side descend planes to which the artist has given all possible animation, and these produce the apparently arbitrary elevations and depressions which form the eyes, cheeks, &c. If we understand the structure, we are amazed at the greatness underlying it; something faintly akin to the Gothic artists seems to have been given by means very remote from theirs. We recall certain moments at Reims late in the evening, when the cathedral is veiled in twilight, and the statues of the porch disappear in the gloom. The atmosphere seems to magnify the figures we saw distinctly in the daylight.

Rosso seeks to produce this effect. He was the first to attempt it. Twenty years before the *Balzac* was executed, he was making the first studies of this kind at Milan. His *Concierge*, which he calls *Impression d'Omnibus*, was the Alpha of these physiognomical mountains.

Rodin, too, speaks of the "ombre flottante," in which he desires to veil his creations. In his drawings, the line undulates at all the extremities, as if to lose itself in space, and the irregular softly-toned washes seek to efface the contour. His longing for atmosphere prevents him from giving to some of his work a finality which would seem indispensable to any one but himself. He delights in the flaws produced by casting in plaster, and says roundly, that a plastic work shows its highest beauty only in fragments. How right and how absurd all this is!—to shatter the fragment in fragments, because we cannot give the whole even of a part!

The noxious superstition, that we ought to be grateful to the barbarians for mutilating the statues of the Greeks, finds an echo, of course, in this perversity. Because certain torsoes are finer now than they were with their complement of limbs, it is supposed that there can be no more approved method of achieving beauty than to suppress arms and legs. Rodin and many others, Legros more drastically than any, have tried the experiment, and Rosso has been content to work out the law in a fragment, when all his conclusions should rather lead him to avoid everything fragmentary.

We may admit that the *Psyche* at Naples has been very skilfully mutilated. We might carry the conceit so far as to call the blow that split the skull exactly parallel with the inclination of the head, and cut off the arms in such beautiful proportions, a stroke of genius. But this is of little moment, seeing that we do not know what the figure was like originally, and I think the premises have been somewhat hasty in this connection. Such calumnies cannot be ventured upon in regard to any work of the best period. Our admiration of these fragments should go far enough to suppose that the fashioners of perfect bodies could also form



RODIN: VICTOR HUGO
PLASTER MODEL
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

admirable arms and legs. Though mutilation be an advantage—and this it certainly has been in the case of many late works, where the violent action of the body led to exaggeration in the limbs, or where a patron demanded some conventional gesture—yet that which is defective must not be taken as a model, however masterly it may be. Why do we not build houses like the famous isolated columns in the Forum, which are much more beautiful as columns than when they formed part of the temple! Because we could not live in them. And we can give no more conclusive answer than this to those who admire ruined sculpture on principle. Things which are improved by mutilation were never perfect, even if the degree of perfection which was their standard is unknown to us.

Even in our admiration of art, inability to distinguish between cause and effect bears fantastic blossoms, and each becomes the germ of new errors. Rodin is a perfect compendium of such errors, and this is to some extent the secret of his genius. Rosso is inferior to him, in that he errs less. He founders on the relative plausibility of the axioms which lead him to decisions. Rodin is a happy nature, his instinctive desire for richness restrains him from exaggerated simplification. "Simplification without detail results in poverty," he says to his pupils. "Detail is the blood of the organism; it must be included in the whole which envelops without killing it." He is Delacroix' true compatriot, he desires to impress, to demonstrate, to charm; his dramatic instinct awoke when he was still a village school-boy. Other boys wanted to be soldiers or coachmen; he dreamt of the orator's calling; in the school intervals, when his comrades romped in the playground, he mounted the desk, and addressed the empty benches. This naïve dramatic sense has persisted throughout his life.

If logical continuity were of great importance, we should have to place Rodin far below Rosso, for he has touched everything and completed nothing. Rosso's work, on the other hand, may be reduced to a definite formula from the beginning. But in art as in life, this is a result only achieved by limited powers, and our admiration of consistent natures is not determined by the logical working out of their decisions, but by the importance of the things decided upon. Rodin suffers from the immense complexity of his knowledge, but he has also all the advantages thereof. It is his inconsequence which gives us the rich abundance of his works, and allows us to hope that only one side of his activity touched finality in the *Balzac*. It resembles his massive figure, which never abandons a cautious hesitance of gait, a certain indolence of movement, as if it were testing the ground before trusting its weight to it. Rodin has a hundred axioms, and seems to contradict himself as often in his words as in his works. In reality he maintains his equilibrium in each. He has to serve the world he bears within him.

Rosso's endeavours to give the utmost resonance to his speech led him at last to suppress words altogether. He is not the first who has been attacked for his lack of clarity. In many contemporary busts we have some difficulty in finding the face at the first glance. The genius of our age loves disguises, and it is often difficult not to think of some pictorial rebus before works of this sort. When we have got the face we find the little mark on the nose, and the genius to boot. It is a question whether our posterity will have the same patience in seeking and the same success in finding.

There are persons who laugh at Rosso, and there are enthusiasts who follow

him. Who is there to-day who does not find scoffers and adherents! Fundamentally the two are agreed—they follow him when they laugh at him, and laugh at him by following him. The mind that blames or praises here thinks more of itself than of Rosso.

A sincere artist is always a symbol. This man is one, and we must comprehend this if we wish to understand our age. There is something of Rosso in all our modern art. He was more in sympathy with the age than any of the rest, and believed more honestly in its promises. Only time can avail anything, a new epoch, to give a vigorous support to the daring personality. The help which once allowed Michelangelo to forget himself, as in the little Berlin group, cannot serve us now. Only new practical purposes, mightier than those which Michelangelo obeyed, can make sculpture plastic once more.



FIGURE IN THE PORCH OF REIMS CATHEDRAL

IMPRESSIONISM IN SCULPTURE

Rien n'est matériel dans l'espace.—Rosso.

The pictorial element now reigns supreme in French sculpture, and has become one of its factors in all artistic lands—often, indeed, the leading factor. It has induced a remarkable increase in production. More sculpture is produced and more is sold than heretofore. A Bourdelles portrait is not only easier to make, but much more likely to please nowadays than a bust by David d'Angers. The treacherous remainder which would have been left by the talent that essayed a chiselled form conceals itself here occasionally in the convenient accident of uncontrolled and therefore more natural execution. The public in its turn readily receives an art which reflects the accustomed trend of painting, and tries to atone in some measure to Manet and other heroes of Impressionism for the disfavour it showed them by emphasising its amiability to their posterity. This is the more easy to it in that a purely optical harmony suffices for its vitiated conception of art, and the guessing of a riddle in itself satisfies the soul that has no requirements. There never was a time when connoisseurship was more cheaply acquired.

The decline of this art, which seems to recognise no law but its own arbitrary will, is a less edifying spectacle than the decadence of Michelangelo's epigoni. The difference lies in the material. Michelangelo had to reckon with marble, the noble building material of the ancients, on which the Popes insisted as long as the store of old Rome lasted. The stubbornness of the stone was in itself a difficulty which limited the craftsman's caprices. It is a curious irony that an Italian of our own times, denied all participation in the architect's labours, should have arrived by a logical sequence at a total renunciation of stone. Wax satisfies his caprice, and its price is not prohibitive. Naturally he strives to get all possible charm from this material. The subsequent casting is a matter of secondary importance to him, a mere process of preservation. Like the painter, the sculptor now seeks his effects, not in the solution of a monumental problem—where, indeed, should he find this ?—but in a peculiarity of workmanship entirely manual in the narrowest sense. Here again handwriting comes to the fore. Rodin parried the attacks on his *Balzac* with the curt retort that this, too, contained his " modelés essentiels."

Perhaps, indeed, the Whistlerian postulate discussed below * is even less demonstrable here than when applied to painting, and the desire of the modern sculptor may be a result of the knowledge that every ancient work shows traces of the tools with which it was executed.

But this seductive appearance is deceptive. The material division from which colour arises in painting does not enter into the question here. The division of light and shade is all that remains, and this is quite independent of the petty

* See section "Whistler," below.



ROSSO: HEAD OF A CHILD
FOLKWANG MUSEUM, HAGEN, WESTPHALIA

manipulative question to which the Whistlerian axiom is here reduced. The play of light in itself, whether produced in a picture by smaller or larger brush-strokes, or in a bust by smaller or larger pressure of the thumb, is meaningless. Light is of use to us only if it lights something.

This purpose is lost sight of more and more. Harmony, the only reasonable objective, the only one by which the work of art can be separated from the sea of arbitrary activity, loses ground in the piece of painting and the piece of sculpture in the same proportion as once did harmony among the arts as groups. Isolated works arise within the work, the beauty of the whole disappears in details, and the sculptor makes a shapeless colossal figure in order to show an effective head.

This was never the case among the old craftsmen. Far above the question of smooth or rough stood the purpose of the whole, and the sculptor who, carving his wooden Madonnas, should have set this problem before himself and proposed to solve it at the expense of the rest, even had he been a genius, would have been classed with a carpenter who should make the four legs of a chair and forget the seat.

We have seen how in painting Impressionism has only contributed great and important fragments to art. The same thing has happened in sculpture; but the results, which in painting have been glorified by the glamour of splendid new gifts, are more manifestly pernicious here, and militate against the resignation with which one might rise to the relative enthusiasm due to Rodin's and Rosso's followers. The towering figure of the creator of *Balzac* makes all other sculptors appear small. Think what we will of him, he at any rate spoils our appreciation of others who attempt great works. It is no wonder that the most gifted of the younger generation that has risen around Rodin confine their efforts to sculpture in small. Desbois and Alexandre Charpentier accompany the epic which Rodin dedicates to humanity by pleasant lyrics. They have given many exquisite things to sculpture in small. Here the one essential is taste, which even in this elusive technique seeks to maintain, if not a decisive, at least a graceful proportion among the forms, and to evoke charm out of trifles. They pass their thumbs over the pewter, and from the undulations of the soft metal grow girlish throats, agreeable to the eye as to the hand. This art is as tender as pastel. With it Charpentier carries on the glorious French tradition which breathed its splendour into everything, even the insignificant, and his delicately modulated taste seeks even to preserve the forms of this tradition. The supple limbs of his group on T. Selmersheim's beautiful wooden clock seem almost more flexible than the bronzes of the Versailles chimney-pieces; and this daintiness is doubly surprising in an artist whose broad relief in medals seems to shun all contact with the tradition of Roty, Chaplain, Dupuis, &c., and who carries Impressionism to an extreme even in this domain. But does not the whole of this plastic Impressionism resolve itself into an extreme of the Baroque?

A whole series of artists develop this tendency. Bourdelle translates Beethoven's head into "musical sculpture," Fix-Masseau made a hit ten years ago with his fantastic *Emprise;* Voulot, Millès, Dejean model their charming figurines; the foreigners Troubetzkoi, Vallgren—who is responsible for the little Viennese snake-women—and latterly the German Hoetger, have become known in Paris. The young Hamburger Barlach seems to be evolving a new form from Baroque Impressionism.

Gustave Vigeland, the Norwegian, is almost the only Scandinavian who has

worked in Rodin's manner on original lines. His first large work, *Hell*, of the early nineties, a relief three metres long, with a number of figures, plainly suggests the creator of the *Porte d'Enfer*, perhaps more in the general design than in details. In Vigeland's work Satan is seated over the door in the same manner as *Le Penseur ;* his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, he occupies the centre of the groups, and observes the varying procession of the damned. But the manner differs fundamentally from that of Rodin. It lacks the beautiful rounded arabesque, the fulness of the planes, the rich modelling. Vigeland is by no means Baroque. He suggests the Northern Gothic of Trondhjem Cathedral, and we do not think of Rodin's nixies, but of the towering figures of the citizens of Calais. The Norwegian is less robust; his figures consist chiefly of well-formed bones. As a rule he avoids the undulating line; the *Dance*, executed in Berlin, was an exception. His form lacks the seductive flow of French sculpture, and his symbols belong to the more powerful, but colder, mysticism of the North. The group of a man and woman, happily christened *Le Pardon*, was a Munch translated into beautiful form. The exhibition of the Viennese Secessionists of 1903 included a few things by the Norwegian, in addition to Rodin's *Hand of God*. It would hardly be possible to imagine a greater contrast than the form and symbolism of the Frenchman, who succeeded in giving a coquettish charm to his deep, creative idea, and in winning his effect by means of an agreeable, supple roundness, and Vigeland's group of the aged man, tall and erect, his children clinging round his knees—a structure of lofty, aspiring lines, a Gothic Ugolino.

The remaining manifestations of Rodin's influence have been all in the direction of pictorial sculpture. A large proportion of this sculpture looks as if it had tumbled by mistake into some treacly fluid, and, pleased with the result, had retained it. The material used enhances this effect. It is still the fashion in Paris to follow the example set by Carriès, who was a better ceramicist than sculptor, and to execute small statues in flambé ware, and the grès preferred by Delaherche, Dalpayrat, Bigot, &c., whose molten enamels give forms still more arbitrary. The slightest retouch of a work hallowed by the Impressionist idea is forbidden to the founder of a bronze, and a flaw in the casting is reverenced as if it were some lofty manifestation.

This spirit provokes criticism. A few years ago a French writer set on foot a circular inquiry as to whether it was right to limit sculpture to the functions of a decorative art, content with the creation of harmonious form, or whether it would not be legitimate to allow it to enter into open competition with painting.* Such an inquiry is unimaginable in any age but our own. But even in our own age it is astonishing that the question was seriously answered by all the persons interrogated, among whom were the best artists, both painters and sculptors, the leading lights of criticism, and distinguished collectors !

Rodin's answer, as is fitting, heads the list. He does not go very closely into the matter, but makes it the pretext for one of his inspired hymns to Nature.

" . . . I studied the antique, the sculptors of the Middle Ages, and went to healthy Nature. After the first gropings I gained courage with every step, when I saw that I was in the true tradition of freedom and truth.

" I have held fast to tradition; the École des Beaux Arts broke with it eighty years ago. I uphold the tradition of the primitives, of the Egyptians, the Greeks,

* In the *Nouvelle Revue*, June 1901, and afterwards in book form, "De l'Impressionisme en Sculpture," by Edmond Claris.



ROSSO: TOWARDS EVENING (VERS LE SOIR. IMPRESSION DE BOULEVARD) (1893) WAX
NOBLET COLLECTION, PARIS

and the Romans. I have striven to copy Nature. I record her as I see her, in accordance with my temperament, my sensibility, the feelings she awakes in me. I have not attempted to transform her; I have never imposed any laws of composition upon her, nor tried to harmonise her movements. I have observed them and maintained them in their independence, their full life, their full harmony.

"Nature composes herself, and this composition seems to me much more beautiful than that which is obtained by the application of arbitrary rules. My rule is to leave the model his natural movements. Thus only do we get life and beauty. The conventional attitudes imposed upon models in life schools explain the stiffness and hardness of academic work. These truly disturb the equilibrium and destroy the harmony and composition of Nature. . . ."

He concludes with the proposition that there is but one art, that painting and sculpture are merged in a single art—that of drawing. The field of observation in Nature is so vast that all really strong temperaments can work in it with the means at their disposal, clay or palette.

The very opposite of all this might be urged without being very wide of the truth. Indeed, we might even get nearer to it thus. The love of Nature, that leads to itself by way of the Egyptians and the Greeks, has a large heart. This is the eternal confusion between Nature and natural. Every artist who desires more from the tangible world than to learn the natural from it wanders away from art. It was certainly not naturalism which drew Rodin to the Egyptians and Greeks, but the impulse towards a law that should enable him to stand erect in the presence of Nature, and curb the exaggeration of the impression received from Nature. It was his desire for a formulation of that which does not lie in the visible world, but is grounded in the purposes of art, that which Rodin here calls temperament and feeling, and at other times, as we read in the chapter dealing with him, mathematics and taste. He strays yet farther from the truth when, like Zola, he believes the decisive factor to be temperament. Temperament is included, perhaps, in his vague conception, taste; but this says nothing of the mathematical ingredient, of the immutable constructive element, which substitutes the organisation of art for the organisation of Nature in order to compass the work of art. He has been interpreted by Rosso rather than by his own work, which is distinguished from that of his comrade, and not to its disadvantage, by the very thing his theory suppresses. He imagines himself to be speaking in the name of his supposed naturalism in another part of his answer, when, as a fact, he is expressing his justifiable aversion from the Pre-Raphaelites. He merely proves herewith that the weighing down of the scale on the other side is no less disastrous, that formula alone is unavailing—if, indeed, the Pre-Raphaelites can be said to have had a serious formula. If he recognises rightly that the English stylists lack Nature, *i.e.*, the motor-force of art, he does not hereby prove that with this resource all would have been well.

As yet we are unable to formulate this law which lies outside the senses, and which the artist must apprehend by his understanding. We recognise the same law in the proportions of an Egyptian colossus and of a tiny Egyptian statuette. The same law must also govern the proportions of a creation of Rodin's, although there need not therefore be the faintest suggestion in this of an Egyptian work. The fact that this primitive proportion was gradually approached less and less closely, and that nations fell away more and more from this equation, is the main cause of the decline of the fine arts—metaphorically speaking, be it understood. The rectification of

the millenial error will not be made by discovery of the equation, but rather by an earnest endeavour to avoid the forces which have driven us from the equation. Nature as such can by no means help us. It may possibly contribute one term of the equation, which deals with material aspects, and without the other it is absolutely senseless—*i.e.*, indefinite. The prescriptions which the phenomena of Nature obey mock at mathematics; they are not fixed and immutable from the beginning like those of art, absolute as the proposition that the three angles of a triangle will always make two right angles, but present themselves for our circumscribed consideration on the way of experience. Art is calculable, at any rate, from the standpoint of what it cannot be, although we cannot as yet work out the sum, and shall never succeed in making art by its means. Nature is incalculable, from the very fact that if she were to err we have no means of demonstrating her error, or of correcting it. Until those laws of art which shall prove to us mathematically why we dislike a bad bust are perfectly revealed, the artist has nothing but instinct wherewith to cultivate his genius. He must work like the student of natural science, who gains his experience from a multitude of phenomena; he must see much, and must approach Nature with a knowledge of all the means which were of service to his predecessors, the exemplars to whom his instinct leads him.

What would Rodin be without this instinct which enabled him to choose exemplars? We feel distinctly with him that Nature merely affords him a means of fusing the impressions which his genius received before works of art: it is an amalgamating medium.

Baudelaire says in his "Art Romantique" that beauty is always dual, though it may have the appearance of unity: that it consists of an eternal, immutable element, and of a relative element which belongs to the epoch, to fashion, morality, passion. He may have had something touching tradition and freedom in his mind. I believe there is plurality rather than duality—multiple elements, not so various as those of the life of natural objects, but nevertheless so extensive that we cannot yet survey them comprehensively. They are all variable, but the law which welds them into a work remains eternally the same.

Nietzsche said once, "Oh! stupidity! Classicism was supposed to be a sort of naturalism."

Rodin's worship of Nature is a kind of noble, unconscious modesty. "It is honourable in an artist to be incapable of criticism," said Nietzsche.

Rosso's answer to the circular (see above, p. 32) is that of the creator of his works, and culminates in the motto at the head of this chapter. If it be true that nothing material can exist in space, we ought to believe that there can be nothing immaterial in art. For if, indeed, we can conceive of a tangible relation between the two, it is this—that art symbolises the consciousness of Nature, the highest conception of the reality of the phenomenon. Nothing is more real than art. Rosso means that, beholding the head of a person, he cannot imagine the head without a trunk; that he could not make up his mind to contemplate this body apart from its milieu; that he cannot conceive of anything isolated. It is hard to understand how such things could have been formulated and printed without contradiction. . . .

Claris' inquiry was suggested by Baudelaire's dictum that sculpture will always remain an auxiliary art, destitute of all the expressive resources of painting, because it cannot, like painting, impose a single point of view upon the spectator.



B. HOETGER: BRONZE FIGURE

Like all Baudelaire's æsthetic appreciations, this proposition lacks clarity and logic. This is Bartholomé's point of departure.

It might have been expected that he would take the bull by the horns, and base his argument upon his *Monument to the Dead.* He could think of nothing better than to point out that Baudelaire had forgotten work in relief, which, like painting, determines the standpoint of unity, and therefore may compete with painting. Frémiet and Desbois take advantage of the opportunity to assure us that a great deal of very bad sculpture is produced nowadays. The painters interrogated, the gentlemen of the rival faculty, are graciously amiable. Raffaelli's answer in particular, that sculpture too is capable of producing very pretty things, is not lacking in humour. The aged Meunier alone puts forward a timid suggestion that after all sculpture is a monumental art, and has very little to do with painting. But in truth he had not given much thought to the subject. . . .

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It tends somewhat to the salving of a self-esteem oppressed by the successes of our Western neighbours to recognise the results of their plastic art as soon as it quits a sphere circumscribed by the individuality of a single person or the approval of a jury—the sphere of exhibitions and ateliers—and collaborates with works from which even these prosaic times have not succeeded in banishing art altogether.

Every monument by modern artists unveiled in the French capital excites a certain uneasiness in the soul of the thoughtful. Perhaps our times are ill-attuned to the custom of marking our reverence by marble memorials. In any case, we no longer have any proper places for them. I have often found myself carried away with admiration for the statues in the parks of Versailles and Fontainebleau, even for the mediocre ones, which we should never glance at in a gallery. They have struck me as indispensable, and yet I think I am as much of a modern as most people. I have a boundless veneration for Rodin, and would advance unhesitatingly to damnation through his *Porte d'Enfer* if so I might prove the sincerity of my opinions. But I cannot imagine the *Balzac* in any public place in Paris ; indeed, I think the genius of the city would suffer from the presence of this, the greatest genius she has sheltered.

The time is yet to come, but as the decoration of public buildings has now been thrown open to the modern painters, sculpture of the same spirit will slowly conquer public places ; for—and this is the irony of it—this kind is the only one that produces anything of real merit nowadays, anything, that is to say, of permanent value. There are still certain worthy, commonplace " Prix de Rome," who owe commissions to their connections, but the decorations of the Universal Exhibition of 1900 showed—and terrible souvenirs thereof have survived—the spirit of the revolutionary era. There will soon be no more trivialities, and then there will be nothing for it but to take to art—to art, which destroys art.

It has already come to this in industrial art. Here such a disposition is a crime. Carabin, who shows such rare charm in the manipulation of bronze and wood, produces monstrosities such as his chairs and tables formed of women's bodies. The dainty Charpentier, who has so delicate a sense of structure in the arrangement of limbs, loses all proportion when he begins to design furniture, and, exquisite as are some of his details, it is unimaginable that any reasonable industrial art should be evolved on such a basis. When Baron Vitta gave him a commission for a billiard table, a friend jestingly asked if all the billiard balls were to be decorated with carvings.

And Rodin himself, who places taste above everything, would he do better in principle ? The small accessories in his great works, and his bitter criticism of all rational modern essays in industrial art, to which he would refuse all he permits to abstract art, make it highly improbable.

How would it fare with the bold spirit who ventured to say that here lies the criterion of a practical kind, that we require an art which shows a paternal spirit to industry, and once more takes up that very quality of an art which is above all things form, which the Claris circular condemned root and branch ?

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Hitherto we have tried to recognise results independently of particular productions in the history of French painting and sculpture. The two arts show an evident community of aims. They introduce new methods, destined to give a powerful extension to art, and lose many important possessions of the ancients, which were deemed indispensable during the development of earlier art epochs. Thus we conquer and are conquered. Many methods, few purposes, was the fate in both camps hitherto. Dissolution was imminent.

It remains to us to recognise the tendency that seeks to reconstruct, that connects to-day with yesterday, and endeavours to build a new house with the fragments that lie around us in rich profusion.



POUSSIN: RINALDO AND ARMIDA
DULWICH GALLERY



AMAURY DUVAL: A YOUNG GIRL (SALON 1864)
CALAIS MUSEUM



G. VIGELAND. THE DANCE.

FROM A DRAWING OF THE GROUP.



CHASSÉRIAU. DRAWING.

ARTHUR CHASSÉRIAU COLLECTION, PARIS.

II. COMPOSITION

THE INGRES TRADITION

In all the conflict concerning colour and light which distinguishes Impressionism there is so little question as to what has become of the old tradition on which composition relied that we are sometimes greatly astonished to find it still in being, and recognise the last streams from this spring of the greatest artistic activity of France almost as abnormal phenomena.

Ingres painted wonderful pictures, which contain the germ of great compositions, but were perhaps too highly concentrated to become decorations of a flat surface. His whole manner was directed towards reduction. In the narrow compass of the modern picture, which he was forced to accept as the ultimate means of expression, he sought all the art of the old masters, which is so great in frescoes. It was the most brilliant form of that expediency created by the poverty of the age. Poussin's easel pictures look like reductions of the vast decorations of a palace, made for purposes Ingres no longer possessed, and could no longer fulfil when they presented themselves.

Once only did he find a task commensurate with the capacity of his genius, if we except the *Apotheosis of Homer*, in the Louvre, originally designed for a ceiling—the beginning of monumental painting in France, according to Maurice Denis. This was when the Duc de Luynes commissioned him to decorate a room in the Château de Dampierre. The work was interrupted by one of those tragi-comic incidents dear to history, and remains a fragment rich in beauties. Fortunately the studies and drawings are extant. The reader may gather some faint idea of the projected work from our reproduction of the *Age d'Or.**

* Hébert, the last survivor of those pupils who worked under Ingres at the Academy in Rome, told me that the rupture with the Duc de Luynes was brought about by a most trivial affair. Ingres was installed in the Château with his wife, and Madame Ingres took a remark made by the Duke in reference to some domestic occurrence connected with—vegetables, to herself. Ingres, susceptible as a Spaniard, and already irritated by the importunities of his patron, who wanted him to get on faster with the work, threw up his commission, repaid the not inconsiderable advances already made by the Duke, and left the Château, never to return. The commission had been given as early as 1839, when Ingres was still in Rome. The *Age de Fer* was to have been the pendant to the *Age d'Or*. The ground for the former had only just been prepared by Ingres' pupils when the rupture took place (1850). *L'Age d'Or* was completely sketched, and some of the figures were finished. There were eighty nude figures in all, of which Ingres himself said, "Ce sont des paresseux qui se gobergent et boivent dans un doux far niente le lait et le miel des ruisseaux" (Th. Silvestre, "Histoire des Artistes vivants," E. Blanchard, Paris, 1856). There are many drawings for the work in the Montauban Museum. Twelve years after the quarrel Ingres painted a small picture from the drawings (*cf.* "Ingres," by J. Momméja, Paris, Laurens), which bears the inscription quoted upon it, and from which our reproduction is made. Two years later, in 1864, Ingres painted the *Bain Turc* at the age of eighty-four.

In his list of Ingres' works Silvestre further mentions as decorative designs by Ingres the life-size cartoons for painted glass in the chapels of Dreux and St. Ferdinand ordered by Louis Philippe.

To all the talk about Ingres' so-called academicism we need merely oppose three things : that little gem, the *Francesca da Rimini*, at Chantilly, the *Bain Turc*, in the Princesse de Broglie's collection, and the wall painting in the Château de Dampierre. The man who had these three arrows in his quiver was academic in the same sense as Raphael.

The variety of the three subjects is unimportant. It is rather their similarity which we admire, the measure manifested in all three ; the marvellous sagacity which made subject, drawing, colours, all work together to a desired end in each case, and knew how to be always rich, always perfect. Here the true " doctrine " of Ingres is manifest. It is akin to that of his great prototype, who painted the *Ezekiel* in the Pitti Palace, the Madonnas, and the frescoes of the Stanze.

It is true that many of their forms, which delighted contemporaries, are but relics to us, and that certain of the master's pictures which have a place of honour in the Louvre are antipathetic to us. We have no longer patience enough for all the moods of that exuberant life, which lasted longer than that of ordinary mortals. Our need demands a graver art than the varied play of limbs in the *Age d'Or*, which the old man proudly inscribed " Aetatis 82." The wealth here displayed has become too vast for us ; we require greater unity. It is only his doctrine, stripped of all the objective elements he chose, the rhythm, whose living force compels our admiration before all Ingres' pictures, even when we dislike their episodes, that can serve us now.

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Two very diverse tendencies had their source in Ingres, or, rather, were first associated in him. Both found Impressionism insufficient, and strove for linear development. Degas plays the part of protagonist in one, and it seems almost a jest of history that he, the most malicious of all the moderns, in whose footprints a Lautrec has followed, should have woven Ingres' tenderness into the Satanic web of his lusts. The other tendency is of a more decorous nature ; it even seeks to enlist Ingres as an apostle of religion, and turns the line which formed the marvellous contour of the Odalisque's thigh to excellent account in Christian legend. This again is an irony of history, no more sentimental now than of old, when naïve Christianity girded on the armour of Paganism, and used the vessels of concupiscence for solemn oblation to the Holy Ghost.

It must be admitted that the Catholicism of Ingres' pupils was of no particular service to art. Zeal and honest endeavour were not lacking, but all exertions failed to bring about more than a St. Martin's summer of ecclesiastical art, no more virile than the work of contemporary Englishmen. A whole generation of cultured and well-meaning artists set up their studios in the churches of Paris and Southern France. The greater part of the church painting which greets the tired eyes of strangers here is the work either of direct pupils of Ingres or artists who became his converts later. A contemporary member of the band, Maurice Denis, who at times seems disposed to reckon himself among this generation, but whom justice forbids us to confound with it, has sketched their history with pious affection,* and makes an attempt to distinguish the academics from the artists. Mottez, Janmot, and the aristocratic Hippolyte Flandrin, to whom the Louvre owes a pair of remark-

* In a little periodical, " L'Occident " (17 Rue Eblé, Paris), numbers for July, August, and September 1902, with illustrations after Amaury-Duval, Mottez, Janmot, and notably Chassériau, under the title " Les Élèves d'Ingres." It is a pity that he has omitted Court, of whom it would be interesting to know something, even were he not so closely associated with the group.



PRUD'HON: POTIPHAR'S WIFE

MARCILLE COLLECTION, PARIS

ably delicate portraits, are welcome to a period that longs for rest; the drawings of Amaury-Duval and Lamothe will perhaps endure longer. Chenavard and Orsel are preserved by their own literature, or that of their pupils. They nearly all wrote, and were brilliant teachers. Lamothe is the one who has become best known in this way post festum. Degas went to school under him, as did that remarkable draughtsman Ch. Serret, who died almost unnoticed a few years ago. In course of time he broke away from Ingres' sharp line, and approximated to Renoir's mellow forms; he made many delightful drawings of children, which recall the aged Frölich. Vollard owns a fine collection of these drawings. Many are to be found in the studios of the younger painters.

Taking it all for all, it was the same tendency that manifested itself in Germany under Overbeck, who was closely connected with the Frenchmen; but whereas the pious Germans are now relegated to the spare bedrooms of good families, where they appear in the form of faded engravings, the Frenchmen are enshrined in the churches. Mottez learned the technique of fresco in Italy. At the Centennial Exhibition Roger Marx showed a beautiful sample of his work—a portrait in fresco—which was afterwards acquired by the Luxembourg. Like the Germans, these Frenchmen represented the reaction against the paganism of the older artists; the Nazarenes had as their medium a profoundly national legend, the pious, but by no means Catholic, German Volkslied. Compare the Wartburg frescoes or Rethel's *Dance of Death* with the languid French legends. Here the Germans were invariably superior; they had their Nüremberg, and the tradition of Holbein. For them the movement was a field in which they found themselves the last muster of purely Germanic artistic forces, which might have resulted in a German monumental art, if a fitting receptacle had been available, a worthy treasure-house, which would have incited the following generation to carry on the work with more powerful artistic means. For the French, on the contrary, every open advance upon the path was a national aberration. Ingres' indebtedness to Holbein is obvious. When Degas copied the *Anne of Cleves* he was going back to the fountain-head. But the result of the influence ought to have remained purely French. Ingres never appears so unnatural—I had almost said so insufferable—as when he seems to approach this German pietism.

The most important results of all the well-meant exertions of Ingres' disciples are a few fine studies of the nude, which lurk among the sacred garments here and there, suggesting the possibility of a great composition better than the legends of the pictures. The only great artist who came from Ingres' studio placed himself in direct opposition to his comrades. He was the Masaccio of the nineteenth century, Chassériau, whose fate was in many respects akin to that of the great precursor of the Quattrocento. Like him, he came out of a severely formal school, the vital elements of which he saved for posterity. He lived but little longer than the painter of the Brancacci Chapel. His works, too, are in danger of falling into dust, and he has a common title to fame with his prototype, for he survived in the generation of artists which outlived him.

THÉODORE CHASSÉRIAU

Regrettez vous le temps ou le ciel sur la terre
Marchait et respirait dans un peuple de dieux;
Où Vénus Astarté, fille de l'onde amère,
Secouait, vierge encore, les larmes de sa mère,
Et fécondait le monde en tordant ses cheveux?

MUSSET.

CHASSÉRIAU was one of the wonder-children of art. Chévillard, in his well-informed work upon this painter,* tells the remarkable story of the boy who at ten years old begged to be allowed to go into Ingres' studio instead of to school, and who, when he was allowed his own way for fear of an illness, very soon became the master's favourite pupil. His apprenticeship lasted but a few years, for Chassériau was too young to accompany Ingres when he was summoned to the Academy in Rome. It was only the very sensible opposition of the youth's family which put an end to the project.

We should perhaps be grateful to chance which so arranged matters. Chassériau had learnt just as much as he needed to make him conscious of the linear task of the school. Ingres' absence enabled him to approach France's other great star, Delacroix, who, shortly before the fifteen-year-old Chassériau made his début at the Salon, had painted his first Oriental pictures, and, to Ingres' bitter chagrin, had exercised a decisive influence on the boy.

Criticism has long assigned Chassériau the place between Ingres and Delacroix, which is apparently so natural a one for him. Those of his works which approximate to Delacroix' domain have given rise to controversies which ignore the decisive spirit of these. In reality nothing was more natural than that one of his temperament and with such a natural aptitude for painting should not have resisted the impression made by a similar temperament, by a Delacroix, the artist who decided the fate of painting. In this case not to have followed would have meant incapacity to follow. Delacroix' conquest was decisive from the purely technical standpoint; chance further ordained that Chassériau should complete himself. He too learned the possibilities of colour in nature in the East, and went forth on this journey from the same circle as Delacroix. Similar tasks were assigned to each in Paris: Delacroix lithographed Manfred, Chassériau etched Othello. Their literary inspiration was the same. They looked at the world with kindred eyes; Chassériau's notes seem to give us the completion of Delacroix' journal.† He had just time to assimilate the new doctrine of colour.

* Valbert Chévillard, "Théodore Chassériau," with a fairly complete catalogue of works (Lemerre, Paris, 1893).

† M. Arthur de Chassériau, the artist's nephew, possesses a large number of these notes, many of them illustrated by drawings. Chévillard's book contains a selection from these. Unfortunately many of the notes, as also the letters to his brother, have perished. They happened to be in the Palais des Comptes at the time of the Commune, in the office of a relative who had a post there.



INGRES: THE GOLDEN AGE.

A LATER VERSION OF THE UNFINISHED WALL-PAINTING
IN THE CHÂTEAU OF THE DUC DE LUYNES, DAMPIERRE

He visited the East in 1846, and died in 1856. It is no wonder that many of the easel pictures painted during these ten years, now the most important items of the Arthur Chassériau collection, should reveal the influence of Delacroix very clearly. There are marvellous things among them. The *Skirmish between Arab Horsemen* is gem-like in colour, and hardly less fiery than many a Delacroix. In his harem pictures he gave himself up to the seduction of colour with an ardour untrammelled by any recollection of the severe Ingres tradition. His last work, the sketch of a harem interior, was an exquisite reminiscence which suggests Fragonard.

Nevertheless, the Chassériau we have before us now is separated from Delacroix by a whole world. The one was mighty passion, the other enthusiasm. The difference makes itself felt even in Chassériau's copy of the *Medea* of his prototype (in the Cheramy collection). Leonardo, whom he also copied,* and with far more mastery, was much more congenial to him.

The continuation of Delacroix in colouristic development could, in fact, only proceed on the lines laid down by modern art. There were at one time a thousand forces capable of accomplishing this task in a variety of manners; whereas, on the other side, that of the task bequeathed by Ingres, collaborators who have really created must be reckoned by units.

When Chassériau, a youth of nineteen, produced his *Venus Anadyomene*—she stands half in profile on an island coast, both hands uplifted to her hair—the hour of his epiphany struck. We might enumerate a divine series of such figures of Venus in art, which should begin with that ascribed to Botticelli in the Berlin Museum and include the marvel by Lorenzo di Credi in the Uffizi. In this series Chassériau's work should find a place. The little picture † is still weak in colour. The lithographic reproduction by the artist himself gives the measure of his creative power better, and has all the bloom of youthful tenderness. In the further manifestation of this art, the *Apollo and Daphne* of the Arthur Chassériau collection, the colour of the brush was an adverse rather than a contributory element. Chassériau's colour was never seen to greater advantage than when he lithographed this beautiful composition for "L'Artiste." When in his *Venus* he expressed the yearning of a belated worshipper of Italy's great past, he had never left France. When he painted the *Apollo and Daphne* he had been to Rome, and it was there that this remarkable pictorial manner, so alien to the French Academy in Rome, first found expression. Compare the *Daphne* with the *Venus*. The *Venus* is almost completely enveloped in the modelling of the pencil, and very cleanly, as Ingres required. In the *Daphne* the white of the paper plays a part; we have only the outline, very much less definite than formerly, and a little shading here and there. And how superbly the beautiful body rises from the arms of the kneeling singer! The pose is very similar to that of the *Venus*. It has gained nothing in correctness; there are glaring blunders in the junction of the splendid outstretched arm with the shoulder; but, on the other hand, how wonderfully the gestures of the suppliant god respond to every trail of the naked figure! The trees of the wood complete the rhythm. We feel how this nude form is growing into the large movement of the vegetation, without any of the petty details with which the favourite episode is invested by others; it is true poetry. The *Venus* was a beautiful arabesque, with something of the voluptuous

* The *Gioconda*, in the same collection.

† Now in the possession of M. Pierre Marcotte de Quivière, Paris.

tenderness to which Ingres himself gave way in happy moments; but she has an air of detachment, seems hardly to belong to us. For the *Daphne* any of our most modern poets might write the verses which the kneeling singer stammers, and we should all understand them, without thinking of the beautiful myth.*

This wonderful sensuous medium of expression, which caresses the eye, as it were, with its delicate bloom, Chassériau owed neither to Delacroix nor to Ingres. We never find it again. Court, another artist too soon forgotten, of whom we were reminded at the Centennial Exhibition by the fascinating *Daphnis conducting Chloë to the Bath*, had perhaps tones faintly akin to these in his lyre, but he made them over-dulcet, whereas Chassériau's irresistible charm lies in this, that he is never sickly in his sensuousness, but preserves the natural attitude characteristic of the Oriental in this connection. Like Degas and Gauguin, he was a creole, and although he was brought up in Europe the East must have moulded him. It was an elementary, I might almost say a conventional, addition with which he modified the tradition of Ingres. Théophile Gautier calls him an Indian who had studied in Greece. It is as if the West had given him words, the East melody. Even in the pictures in which he is most Ingresque this impression persists. There is nothing that conforms more perfectly to his master's doctrine than the *Méditation et l'Étude*, one of the frescoes of the Cour des Comptes. Two women typify the theme. One lies in picturesque abandon, with a flower, *the* flower, in her hand, her beautiful meditative head supported on her arm. The second figure studies the usual book. Ingres can have found nothing to move his wrath in this arrangement; nor was Orientalism in itself repellent to the painter of the Odalisque. But this Oriental atmosphere may well have been so. The figures are not only beautiful lines and voluptuously modelled planes; they are also women. A natural Oriental indolence pervades the symbolic forms. Behind the high philosophy of these attitudes we divine the sweet idleness of the very unphilosophic women of the harem, the contented lassitude of the flesh, the play of seductive secret meditations. A smile trembles over all this solemnity, giving the faintest pucker to the brows, and bedewing glances and gestures with a gentle humanity. Far more important, to my mind, than Chassériau's emulation of his great rival's colour was his mysterious application of Delacroix' pictorial element in the richer development of his drawing. This is apparent not only in his figures, but above all in landscape, in the peculiar treatment of trees, &c. Hereby Chassériau contributed to a development of the linear element, and transmitted to his successors not only a part of Ingres, but also Delacroix' gift merged into line, which was thus preserved to monumental decoration. Chassériau came into the world with the capacity for fertilisation from the East, which may compare in importance with Manet's assimilation of Spanish influences. His contact with Delacroix was a result, not a cause; it deepened and beautified his Orientalism. But this was developed long before he saw Delacroix. We are distinctly conscious of it in the fine portrait of himself with the jet-black hair, enframing the dark complexion, the large, deep-set eyes, and the over-full lips. Again, in his famous portrait of his sisters, *Les deux Sœurs*, a barely perceptible exotic tinge adds a singular charm to the conception. Where among all the works of a period so rich in portraits, even in those of Ingres or of David, shall we find such a combination of tenderness with gravity?—and this in spite of the subdued colour, which hardly gives a hint here of the future colourist. It might be called a monumental private portrait, so

* The picture was, I believe, two years later than the lithograph.



INGRES: LE BAIN TURC

THE ABOVE IS NOT IDENDICAL WITH THE PRINCESSE DE BROGLIE'S "BAIN TURC", WHICH IS OVAL, AND SHOWS IMPORTANT VARIATIONS IN THE FOREGROUND AND ON THE LEFT, THOUGH THE GENERAL ARRANGEMENT IS THE SAME.

grandly are the two figures brought together, their family likeness turned to account for a masterly parallelism, worthy of a fresco painter. But this would not suggest the charm of the dusky blossom that lurks in its heart. In the *Toilette of Esther*, painted at about the same time, this blossom stands revealed.*

The *Esther* seems to me the gem of the easel pictures. Earlier than the others, it has not, as yet, the full, free poetry of the *Daphne*; it is a further evolution of the *Venus*, which it recalls in the gesture of the hands, uplifted to the hair. But no one who saw the *Venus* could have foreseen such a development. This time the figure is seated, facing the spectator. The exquisite plane of the naked torso occupies the centre of the picture; slaves on either side present the jewels with which Esther is to appear before the king. The dreamy, far-away expression of the sweet figure is of exquisite beauty. Here the East blossoms in a fashion quite unlike that of Delacroix' orgies of colour; we seem to catch a glimpse of the soul of exotic beauty, whereof Delacroix saw the outward splendour. We are reminded of a much later artist, of Gauguin, in his rare moments of calm and happiness.

This is perhaps the secret of Chassériau's monumental art, the natural calm which only the East possesses. The intention of the monumental painter is also clearly apparent. The whole picture lies in the action of the arms. The black slave holds her casket with the typical gesture of the ancients. A delicious play of line, never contradicting itself, and expanding in vigorous breadth at the base, runs from her head over the hands and arms of Esther and the bust of the other slightly higher figure. The bodies of the two flanking figures are cut off almost schematically by the frame—a masterly touch. I am inclined to rate this little picture even higher than the gorgeous *Tepidarium* in the Louvre, the beautiful monument he raised to the master of the *Bain Turc*, in which we may admire both what the pupil took from his teacher and what he added. In spite of its beauty this remains a brilliant school picture. The new elements that went beyond Ingres lie in the *Esther*. M. Cheramy's little *Ariadne*, too, has strangely modern features. In the marvellous simplification of the action here we seem to discern, not Puvis, but Maurice Denis.

This art found a task worthy of it on the staircase of the demolished Palais de la Cour des Comptes. The historian has little to detain him here. The Palais has disappeared, and where the great panels of *Peace* and *War* stood before the Franco-Prussian conflict the engines of a modern railway station now rush past. I saw the frescoes. Ten years ago it was still possible to form an idea of their original splendour. The Commune, which set fire to the Palais, is not responsible for the almost complete destruction of the paintings: a large portion survived the fire, and this was not altogether disfigured by the flames, but had acquired something of a venerable tone, which gave a deeper tinge to Chassériau's tender melancholy. The monstrous neglect of survivors, who left the frescoes to the mercy of wind and weather for nearly thirty years, must answer for our loss—the same authorities who are allowing Chassériau's few church paintings to perish in dark, damp corners,† just as they are allowing Delacroix' decorations to perish. The preservation of a fragment of the gigantic work is due to one or two private

* *The Two Sisters* was at the Salon of 1843, and was not understood. The *Esther* had already figured in the Salon of 1842. Both are in the A. Chassériau collection, as well as the little picture mentioned above, *Apollo and Daphne* (1846), and the artist's own portrait (1838).

† Church of S. Merri, Rue St. Martin.

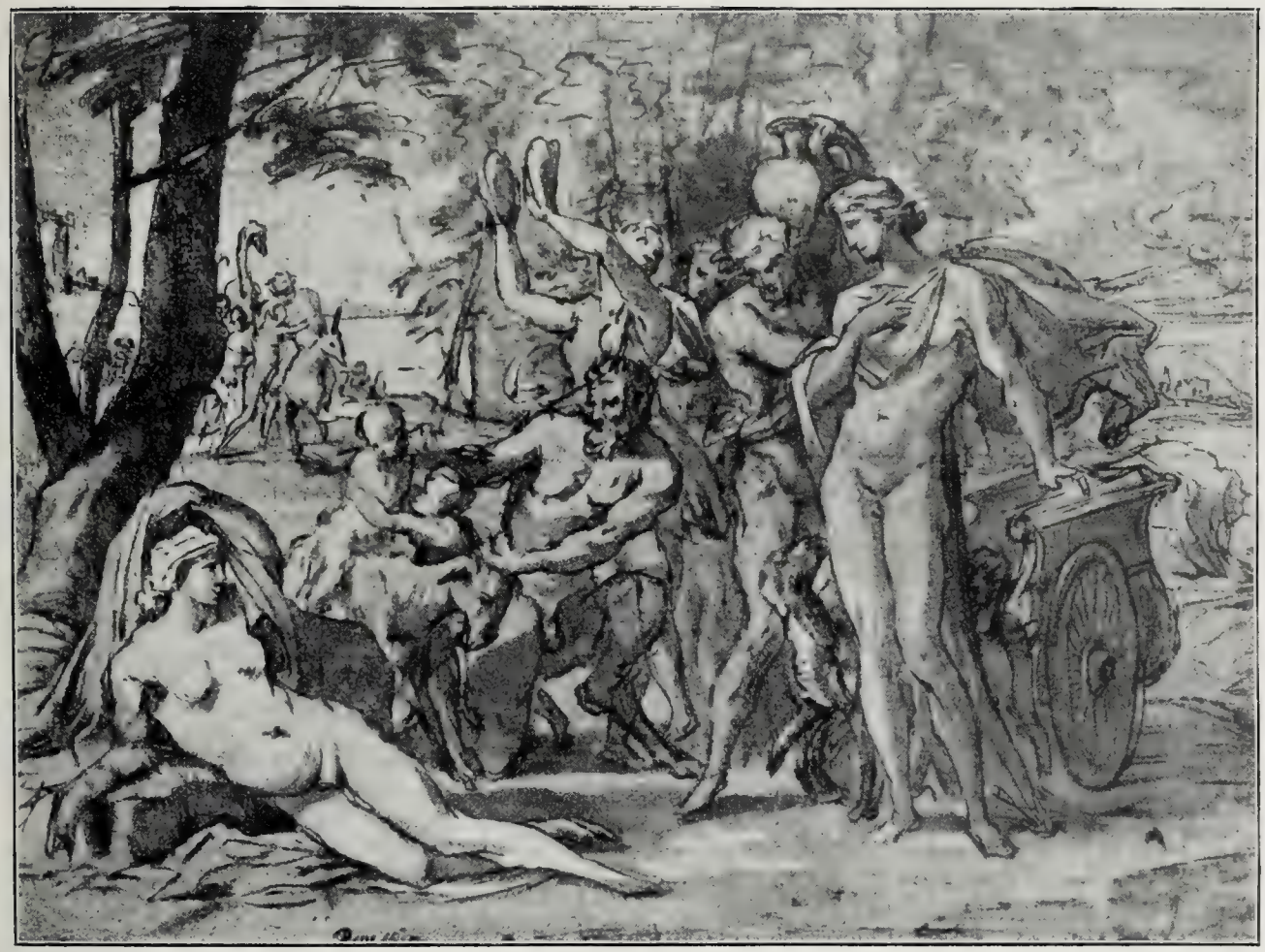
individuals, notably the artist's nephew, Arthur Chassériau, Roger Marx, and the late Ary Renan.* The frescoes were removed from the walls with infinite labour. A large portion of the rescued fragments are still packed in chests. The large fragment, almost half of the *Peace*, was put together and transferred to canvas; it was exhibited at the Universal Exhibition of 1900, and now hangs in the vestibule of the Louvre beside the Botticelli fresco. The drawing for the panels, in the possession of M. Arthur Chassériau, gives some idea of the general effect. In the Louvre fragment there is a lack of atmosphere about the serried figures; we miss the vast background, which allowed the eye to divide the effect. Chassériau's art is distorted by the arbitrary nature of the enforced lesion. It is as if one should strike two or three chords on the piano which call imperatively for a continuation, and then walk away. Nevertheless it is sometimes possible among these few tones to recognise in fragmentary fashion the grandiose harmony of those Elysian Fields which inspired Théophile Gautier's finest prose. He little thought that his description of the frescoes would one day prove a powerful factor for their reconstruction.

In the two panels Chassériau has written the history of the synthesis he accomplished. It is significant that in the *Peace*, the colourless school of Ingres, tempered by the Oriental softness of the modelling, prevails, whereas the forms of the smiths, who are preparing for war, are akin to Delacroix, both in the painting of their muscular nudity and in their strong colour. We might call the *Peace* Day, and the *War* Night. In one we have the cheerful, careless lyric poetry which recalls Poussin, in the other the drama of the Rubens temperament. Both are Chassériau. He at least came very near to a solution of the problem involved in penetrating both the scenes of this fresco with his own individuality, and thereby also approached the solution of the great artistic problem of modern times. He did not finally accomplish it. His life was too short by some ten or twenty years. A consideration of his prolific life convinces us that harsh Death robbed us of his ripest and most brilliant period.

If this period would have followed immediately on the time which was interrupted by his sudden death seems doubtful. In spite of Paul de St. Victor's glowing hymns in their praise, it is impossible to rank the last great decorations in the Chapel of St. Roch and the dome of the apse in St. Philippe du Roule with, or even very close to, the earlier works. In the two frescoes of the baptistery, as far as they are still recognisable, there is scarcely a trace of personal charm, in spite of the Oriental theme. In the interim the artist seems himself to have undergone the rite he painted, for his own individual Greek manner evidently rebelled against the specifically Christian sentiment essential in this, as in the Descent from the Cross in the cupola. He did his best to keep out the pagan element, the exquisite dreaminess of his *Peace*, the sweet, feminine aroma of his *Tepidarium*, and in so doing lost what was best in his art, in order, strangely enough, to come into the dangerous vicinity of Delacroix, whose shadow has certainly not been overcome in the painting of the cupola.

All his best works clearly indicate that he would have found it hard to free himself immediately from the influence of the mightier spirit. Rarely do we return to the springs from which we issued, and these, in his case, contained the sources of his true value. The Chassériau we love, the Chassériau who is of great

* See his illustrated article in the "Gaz. des Beaux Arts" for February 1898, and Roger Marx's illustrated article in the "Revue Populaire" of the same date.



POUSSIN: ARIADNE AND BACCHUS. DRAWING

and inestimable importance to the monumental art of France, is the Primitive who was never too young to give the most individual elements of his manner.

The great Puvis accomplished what was still left to do. In his youth he was on terms of friendship with the painter of the *Peace* fresco. A romance of no ordinary kind separated them, and the worshippers of the great president of modern artistry deliberately suppress the name of the man who proved his St. John. This helped to make the veil of oblivion that overhung Chassériau still denser. With the exception of a few slight hints given by Roger Marx, there is to this day no document recording the thanks due to Chassériau's manes for having proclaimed the advent of the decorator of the Pantheon. Chévillard's book is full of exaltations of his hero at the expense of that Delacroix whom he never equalled, and says not a word of his influence on his successors. Now both protagonists and secondary personages have left the scene. The fame of the creator of the *Ludus pro Patria* is brighter and purer than ever. He was not only greater, but more fortunate than his predecessor. All the more does it behove us ungrudgingly to recognise that all a contemporary could give to the master of the Pantheon frescoes was lavished on him by the gentle hand which created the *Venus Anadyomene*. Puvis is not belittled by such recognition, but it raises Chassériau to high Olympus, to sit on the right hand of the venerable master.



CHASSÉRIAU. ETCHING.

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

As long as Puvis lived people went to the Salon to see pictures, and put up with all its audacities. When one got to him at last through the tumult of the rooms, all the trumpets of the big and brutal musicians and all the squealing of the little pipers seemed to cease. It was like coming into a church.

The mighty stream of Impressionism broke at Puvis' feet too, but not as against a stony dam which repels the waters and drives them into another direction; rather as on a broad alluvial shore, grateful for the fertilising flood, and sucking it in at a thousand pores. Puvis was like a filter, through which all the colour of the moderns passed, issuing therefrom in a purified form. Many have called him sickly and pale on this account, whereas his was in fact the moderation of omnipotence, the most perfect form of health. His highly spiritual art has been contrasted with Besnard's sensual Impressionism, because the latter is better fitted to satisfy, or, indeed, to satiate, the appetite. Besnard, most dexterous of the dexterous, was not saved from bankruptcy on various occasions by his determined prodigality of colour. He is at his worst in this respect in the wall-paintings of the chemical laboratory of the Sorbonne. I recall with a shudder that chemographic inauguration, when reds and yellows swam before one's eyes, and the printed scenario handed to each participant proved powerless to give the much-desired enlightenment. Besnard was the more culpable here in that the want of division in the colour was aggravated by a systematic avoidance of any sort of harmony in the composition. Only the early Besnard, who painted the École de Pharmacie, is innocuous as a decorator, if we except certain agreeable drawing-room pieces, such as M. Bing's ceiling. And in the École de Pharmacie colour played him the opposite trick ; here he is more subdued than he ever dreamt of being, and very soon there will be nothing of the pristine splendour left. Moderation is the Alpha and Omega of decorative painting. Giotto knew what he was doing, and Puvis was his disciple. His mighty shadow is to be seen growing up in Puvis far above the youthful form of Chassériau, and blessing his latest progeny. We still have no line, which belongs entirely to us, and is fitted for such tasks. But from the traditional line, Puvis subtracted everything that could possibly be dispensed with, so that the conventional is only to be found in his work as in that of a more modern Japanese. He had the singular good fortune to possess a personality in perfect harmony with this convention, which in him produces unity, and appears as instinct. Every one of his attitudes is to be found in every drawing which he made on the spur of the moment, with no thought of future use. Repose seems as much a personal characteristic of his, as movement of Degas, or softness of Renoir. He achieves it by an extremely simple form, which could hardly be reduced further without impoverishment. Under the impression that we are dealing with a descendant of Giotto, we look involuntarily for the characteristics of the style, and find good nude studies instead.

He did not always show this mastery of the human form. We hear that his



CHASSÉRIAU: FRAGMENT OF THE FRESCO IN THE DEMOLISHED PALAIS DE LA COUR DES COMPTES

LOUVRE, PARIS

bad drawing was conspicuous when he was in Couture's studio. Synthesis tormented him, before he had got the parts together, and even later he often sacrificed detail to it. When several hundreds of his chalk drawings were brought together in the Salon of 1896, it was impossible not to feel a certain sense of monotony.

But between them hung two lifesize nudes, three-quarters length, which he had painted for Durand Ruel, a dark and a fair beauty, one seen from in front, the other from behind. The flesh, especially in the dark figure, has the cool tightness which Cranach always suggests—it is only to be found in art—but without the virginal quality of our primitive master. It is, indeed, by no means primitive; full, and at the same time fresh, somewhat as if Titian had been tempered by a few ounces of Cranach. And this was apparently drawn without the obviously wonderful technique which good Manets or early Renoirs display in the lively play of light upon the flesh, without the fleshly element, one might almost say, only with a marvellous gift for retaining all that is cool, full and plastic.

Such beauty of material is rare with Puvis. Sometimes his single figures look like fragments of architecture. He stretched out the boldly sweeping Ingresque line, thinking the while, like Raphael, of Michelangelo, and he distributed the effect over a wider surface. Above all, he thought of large spaces.

The secret of his composition is the same which makes the beauty of the city of Paris. There is space in it. It has the wisdom we miss so sorely in Michelangelo's tremendous *Last Judgment*, the lack of which will lead a less enthusiastic generation to regard many an Italian fresco more coolly than we do to-day: the art of rightly estimating the cohesion of well-placed figures in a picture. With him we never find the puerilities employed by others no less famous for the purpose of stopping up holes. He leaves empty everything that can possibly be left empty. We have to get accustomed to this; we are so accustomed to a beautiful abundance that we sometimes feel chilled by Puvis. The emptiness in Puvis often produces this feeling, and it is by no means always deliberate, even when it arises naturally. Puvis was a very sincere artist, who preferred to renounce altogether when he could not say something that seemed to him necessary. With the old masters the opposite is just as natural. Chassériau's enthusiasm filled up the surface as the popular poet of the East filled out his legend: invention flows from him as from a dreamer, and his variety was no impediment to the well-weighed gesture, to which he looked for his distant effects. Even in his pictures the spirit of Ingres has swept away the superfluous: we clearly see the trees which people the grove of his culture. Puvis stripped the trees even of their leaves to get more air.

It is a new art for France. In the eighteenth century a thousand episodes claim our attention. There is not a corner where we do not espy the curve of some amorous cheek, the flutter of some dainty petticoat. We forego the stately attitude of the older masters with light hearts. Throughout the whole period there was nothing which could or which ought to have been seen from a distance; the right point of view was from the canopied bed of the discreet interior to the opposite white and gold wall.

The great Poussin had the right standard. His pictures are splendid old dishes in which he piled rare fruits. With him, again, the standard of his time was his. It is nearer to us than that of the later men. To appreciate Puvis, we must worship Poussin.

Poussin is commonly blamed by us for the things which made his age superior

to ours. We do not find him individual enough. That it was not necessary for such people to proclaim their individuality, that they were able to balance their meaning on a little finger, that they could express the highest qualities with a smile, with a gracious movement, and further, that they lived in Rome, is made a reproach to them by the self-interest of the modern revolutionary. To me, the particularity of a work of art seems the deeper the more varied its affinities with other works of art are. In many works, the element which appears to us their most intimate personal charm, is their impersonal quality. I should like to know what would remain of Fantin-Latour, if we could not find Poussin in him, and whether the relation between certain portraits by Manet and by Frans Hals is anything but a source of pleasure to the spectator? An artist who offers us only himself is inconceivable, and the modern tendency to demand this, especially marked in Germany, is the canker of our modern culture. There is nothing more dependent than the freedom of certain artists, who do not dare to expose their individuality to the shadow of the museum. The Berserkers who look upon the art of the old masters as a bygone thing, often fall into a more servile dependence on contemporary coteries. The art of the modern exhibition is not only unlike that of the ancients, but unlike anything. All numbers may be reduced to unity, except zero. Compare the beautiful early works of Carolus Duran, founded on the old masters, with the puerilities he manufactures now. It is not their academicism which makes contemporary painters insupportable, but their lack of all culture.

Puvis de Chavannes' achievement in venturing on such an art without the surroundings proper to a Poussin was without parallel. To wish that it had been more perfect, more convincing in all its manifestations, is to fail to understand our being. The fact that it persists and opens up possibilities to us hardly dreamt of before the time of Puvis would be of itself enough to give it value. In an age absolutely out of sympathy with the tendencies by which Puvis was governed, an age that belongs to a Forain, and in which all is haste and turmoil, he painted things the legends of which signify something like eternity. Just a little apart from us, an Arcadia! Close to the Boulevard, a world of beauty! Poets have compared him with Böcklin. Why not? Poetic criticism is a person of light manners, who offers her favours to-day to Puvis, to-morrow to Böcklin, and afterwards is not very clear which is which. Böcklin must certainly have been more to her taste.

The most essential difference between the two probably is, that the one embodies his invention in a form, the other his form in an invention. This latter way has not saved Puvis from a second comparison, which the more enlightened have forced upon him—a comparison with Burne-Jones.

There are some very early drawings by Puvis. They were at the general exhibition at Durand Ruel's a few year ago. I should say that he was about eighteen at the time of their execution. They resemble Burne-Jones' latest works, and this is to the Englishman's credit.

Puvis lived in Arcadia as an artist, Burne-Jones as a dilettante. Or indeed, was Burne-Jones ever in Arcadia at all? Did he ever get beyond his secluded book-lined rooms in London? Not Puvis, but Gustave Moreau was his French counterpart, the man who founded the art of beautiful souls, and decked Chassériau's exquisite nudities with sham pearls. Theirs is not the art that could restore fresco to our age. The only picture in which Puvis is like Moreau, the early *Beheading of John the Baptist*, is finer and more pictorial than all the Symbolists put together. It is only the relation to a common prototype which gives him at



CHASSÉRIAU: VENUS ANADYOMENE
LITHOGRAPH

times an apparent likeness to the jewel-painter. Like the whole of Chassériau's circle down to Odilon Redon, Puvis has evident affinities with Leonardo da Vinci. No trait is so characteristic of each member of the circle as this relation. Chassériau created his poems in the atmosphere of the *Gioconda;* he did not philosophise, did not conventionalise the sensations of his great ancestor as did Moreau, but he aimed at a like conception of the sensual charm of the whole world that was revealed to him. He was the one who approached most nearly to Leonardo, not because he aspired to resemble him, but because he felt himself akin to Leonardo's humanity in his innate tendencies. He seems like a member of the Florentine's family, more closely allied to him than were the Florentines to Leonardo, for he was a continuation of that strain in Verrocchio's pupil which was not Florentine. Puvis, on the other hand, saw not the personal but only the artistic aspect of Leonardo, and followed him as a disciple of genius follows the master, not to reach the same point, but to continue. At times he comes very near to Leonardo's pupil, Luini, and bears the same relation to the latter as does Luini to his master. His prototype was to him a principle of technique, the peculiar illumination which makes Luini's pictures appear so modern, and he carried over this principle, expanded and at the same time simplified, to the domain which Chassériau left behind. He is very closely connected with the latter. In many of Chassériau's decorations we may find indications of Puvis' pictures. Puvis began, where his predecessor had culminated. There is something mysterious in the relation, it strikes us through all the obvious and profound differences between the two. The one is all sensuous impulse, struggling between heights and depths, the other, calm wisdom, accomplishing only what it has well considered. It is as if two persons, strangers to each other, had met at one and the same spring. Chassériau came there first, but he often left it; youth carried him away to more fervid joys. Puvis never sought any other inspiration.

Instead of calling Puvis pallid and sickly, the logic of his works might almost tempt us to call them brutal. At the time when Monet's school was dissolving everything solid in colour and light, and every half-defined detail gave its devotees a nervous shock, Puvis went on calmly setting his broad dark contours against the atmosphere, giving his faded brownish gray to the earth, and getting his flesh-tints by making the tone of his ground a shade or two higher. Save for the exquisite blue of his skies, there is often no pure colour at all upon his palette. He contented himself with a wise manipulation of tones within the same colour, and employed the colour of the moderns only where he could use it. Yet in his *Doux Pays* there is not a spot which does not show traces of the noble vitality he was able to breathe into his figures. Roger Marx records a saying of his to the effect that the true function of painting is to animate walls. Beyond this, only pictures about a hand's breadth in size should be painted. He was the only artist in this age of artistic plethora, who was quite clear as to the true tasks of painting, and who knew how to master them. To this end, he invented a free, half classic, half modern legend, very far removed from the instruction which sometimes compelled the earlier painters to exchange their palettes for archæological text-books. This too is empty, stripped of all essential symbols. One can imagine everything with Puvis, but it is not necessary so to do. He wrote in one of his letters: "A picture should always be looked at from in front, and peacefully, never from behind, where the painter has hidden nothing." The legend is no more important to him than it was to Poussin. He did not paint this or that

myth of the Greeks, but the poetry of their culture. While others, the German Greeks more especially, have always remained in the narthex of the temple, Puvis has something of the perfume of the cella, in which Aphrodite stood. He is the finest expression of that deep interpenetration of the Greek spirit which distinguishes the artistic life of France, despite her Forains and Lautrecs, and has shown renewed vitality in our own days. This Grecianism is of course not an artistic tendency, but a result of the French morale. We must remember that the "Daphnis and Chloe" of Longus enjoys the importance of a popular epic in France, and is more in touch with the national spirit than Corneille and Racine. When Bonnard made his drawings for it, and thereby manifested his own truly classic nature, he did something akin to the achievement of William Morris and his circle in England, when they recalled the Arthurian legend, save that he was much more natural and popular in his assimilation. Pierre Louys, in his sweet songs of Bilitis to her Mnasidika has a natural charm, which makes the pretty conceit of the discovery of these songs in old inscriptions credible enough. Puvis was the purest expression of this tendency and exercised the strongest influence upon it. The erotic tinge, which the literature of Young France afterwards evolved from Greek tendencies, was incompatible with the visibility of his works from a distance, but he did not deliberately avoid it. The pure sensuality of the Greeks, which found a resurrection due to racial affinity in him, gave his superb naked figures a deeper significance than the symbolism which its legend served. If the master of the Odalisques may be called the guardian of the classical line, then the painter of the *Bois Sacré*, who once more made this line meet for the highest adornment of the temple, must be accorded the greater title of the creator of a classic spirit, which disregards the amateur's pleasure in strange details to show the value of greater things, more classic than the works of the classicists.

All French activities that were not merged in Impressionism, naturally grouped themselves with Puvis. The majority remained nearer to the pictorial, notably Cazin, whom Degas, when he saw the beautiful ceiling at Lerolle's called "the Puvis of the dwelling-house." Few ventured on the linear manner in which Puvis was so great.

Odilon Redon owed to him, and gave to his successors, a wealth of kindred stimulants, which ensured him a place of honour in the present generation.



MAURICE DENIS. Woodcut.





CHASSÉRIAU: APOLLO AND DAPHNE

ORIGINAL LITHOGRAPH

MAURICE DENIS

> Die blaue Blume sehne ich mich zu erblicken.
>
> NOVALIS.

PUVIS has been called the eternal youth. I do not quite know why; he might as fitly be called the eternal old man, using the term to connote wisdom, and to exclude infirmity. But Denis is young, typically young, a rejuvenated Puvis, who comes very near to the master, when the latter gives himself up to a pious cheerfulness, as in that work which is so closely related to the legends of the school of Giotto, *Christian Inspiration.* Denis' religious sentiment is even more nearly akin to the early Italians. Puvis stood above religion very much as did Goethe in another manner. The Christianity of his legends accords with the scenery of Poussin, with Greek nymphs and all other "antique visions." Denis transforms the nymphs into angels.

In art that piety is always the best which comes from without, from pictures, to go to pictures. The youthfulness in Denis, too, prevents his piety from making a painful impression on our godlessness. He is the Christian damoiseau, who does not suggest scourging and chastisement. His scene is laid in the fresh morning when the boy Tobias set forth with the fish slung over his shoulder, in the sunny wood when the cross gleamed forth between the antlers of the stag before the astonished eyes of the hunter, in the cheerful room of the pious mother, newly delivered, receiving visits from her friends. It is the idealised piety ot the French, and demonstrates in the most attractive fashion why the nation of the Revolution willingly endures the bonds of religion. The frank freshness of this expression has nothing hypocritical about it.

In colour he is richer than Puvis de Chavannes, although he too knows how to control his effects of colour for his purposes. He uses only pure colour, so that the Neo-Impressionists, whose technique he used freely for a time in his early days, might claim him as one of themselves (an honour which must not be lightly estimated, taking into account the natural antagonism of his circle to the Chevreul doctrine), and his gradations are so delicate, that his planes are like a crystal veiled in gossamer, and reflecting the sunbeams. His line is no less delicate; a breath draws it; Ingres' contour made finer by a fraction; and in this delicate envelope everything that art ever gave of grace to line seems to be united. Denis is sharply differentiated from the school of Ingres by this, that he did not absorb any result, but checked it for his own purposes; he went to Italy, and saw not only Giotto and Fra Angelico, but also their successors, more especially the misjudged Lorenzo di Credi, whose tender mannerism was of great value to him. * He rounded what he found in the Grecian spirit, dipped it in the richest colour, and with it filled the planes which Puvis had left empty.

* He made a very characteristic copy of the *Venus* in the Uffizi, which hangs in his studio.

If he thereby took something away from the masterly expression with which Puvis spoke, he gained in charm and created the more fitting form for the smaller scale, which was all he had been able to deal with so far. Puvis was fortunate enough to find large surfaces, even when as at Amiens, sacrificing every material consideration, he gave away his decorations in part, in order to find a place for them. Denis is too essentially a modern artist not to be governed by the available dimensions. But when in 1897 the *Figures dans la Forêt printanière* and the portrait of a young girl from three points of view appeared at the Salon, even the sceptics, who had not seen his decorations at Lerolle's and Chausson's, acknowledged that a great ornamental style was combined with this grace, the harmony of which produced the sweetest music. These pictures are perhaps Denis' masterpieces. The naked female forms move in the flowery garden like exquisite blossoms, matured by a sun of the utmost purity. The bodies have a softness that makes them very unlike the pale leanness of æsthetic womanhood painted from the familiar receipt; perfect, healthily rounded and youthful forms; maidens, who make Paradise seductive, in attitudes proper to goddesses, absolutely nude and full of the most natural, the most adorable chastity. Such things, let the devotees of Nature say what they will, can only be rendered by means of a style. It is not possible to paint them if the artist allows only his own personality to speak. Neither can they be written nor set to music, without this third element between the author and the world, which, even if it be only a veil of transparent threads, causes his expression to be different, better because more universal, than his good will alone could make it. There is a certain modesty in being conventional, in life as in art, an altruism of the highest order, something we can only designate as religion.

Denis does not always show his admirable feeling for this universal law. Among his pictures, as in the works of all moderns, there are things which seem to aim at other things than perfection; and which, at the moment when they appear, deserve that the pretension to perfection should be sacrificed to them. They are the more personal things, which are necessary, in order to reach the others, the impersonal. The artist shouts himself hoarse a thousand times, before he at last succeeds in speaking calmly, and ever afterwards, audibly. Puvis often spoke so, Goethe too, and Mozart. We yearn so persistently for this in the present day, that the exotic in art and literature is agreeable to us, because, in addition to those elements which can be rendered into our own tongue, there is also a kind of intangible cosmic envelope, which gives its undertone to these unaccustomed things, a hidden but perceptible background, which we miss at home. Pleasure in a foreign tongue, in foreign customs, and other periods is a secret yearning for tradition, a kind of nostalgia. Artists whose aims lie in this direction are nearly always optimists, and extremely prolific, because they are governed not only by personal ideas but also by an impulse from without. Denis is no exception to the rule. His most extensive work, so far, is to be found at Le Vésinet, between his own home at St. Germain and Paris. He has decorated several chapels in this district within the last few years, first that of the educational institution of the Ste. Croix Community, then two chapels in the little church of Les Ortes.

The school chapel was an ideal commission. It stands in the midst of a beautiful, bosky garden, and is a simple, snow-white room on a level with the ground. The two lateral walls are taken up with huge windows, through which the green leaves laugh; on the wall behind the altar are Denis' three panels, painted in



PUVIS DE CHAVANNES: THE HAPPY LAND (DOUX PAYS)

DECORATION ON THE STAIRCASE OF M. BONNAT'S HOUSE IN PARIS

splendid pure luminous colours. The large central panel is an open landscape, the favourite motive of the terrace of St. Germain, with radiant figures and a still more radiant sky in which hovers the Cross. Two narrow architectonic side panels with dainty choir-boys enframe the landscape. They were exhibited at the Salon and made very little impression. Here, their effect is indescribable. No splendour, no sublimer art could suit the place so well. Involuntarily, one recalls the chapel in the garden at Padua. Here, one would not exchange this radiant simplicity for the exquisite prototype. Not that we would be understood to blaspheme, it is not a question of Giotto or Denis, but of the difference between two epochs, shadow and light. Who would not wish to come into the light ?

The more important decoration of the two church-chapels is in fresco. * The art is greater, but the setting is not nearly as favourable. The chapels are small circular places with domed vaults, partitioned by heavy ribs, which naturally added a good deal to the difficulty of the work. The painter began with the Lady Chapel, using a palette similar to that of the school chapel, blue, pink, lilac with a great deal of white. Pure lyric poetry ; the Holy Maiden and a band of angels amidst great clusters of blossom-white clouds. The religious element remains entirely in the bud, is all joy ; salvation, not from the bloody sacrifice of the sacred drama, but from the almost more convincing smile of purity. The Chausson ceilings strike the same note. One, where the whole family is represented on the terrace at Fiesole, is just as devout, though here there is no religious intention, and this seems to me the best sort of piety.

The second chapel—of the Sacred Heart—is very much more serious, the most serious work the artist has yet produced, and the most religious ; one must believe or deny here, as Gabriel Mourey says.† It represents the distribution of grace throughout the world ; the very numerous figures, which for the first time betray a distinct, though still poetic official ecclesiastical diction, move upon a rainbow-hued background ; a magnificent full orange, melting into yellow, predominates. The splendour is quite distinct from that of Denis' other works, both in the colour which seems to show a new application of the Neo-Impressionistic principle, and in the unusually rich and significant composition. The spandrils formed by the ribs of the vault below are turned to account with great skill. The cathedrals of France—reservoirs of salvation—are beautifully portrayed in these triangular spaces. The Christ Himself leaves one cold, because He has been made the chief personage, without any apparent necessity arising from the structural law that governs the whole composition. He might rather have been left out with advantage, especially as He appears below in natura, *i.e.*, in a terrible " commercial " statue. How beautiful a statue by Maillol would have been here, the only sculptor capable of producing sculpture in harmony with Denis' decorations.

The Christ of these frescoes is perhaps the only work which entitles Denis to a place in the ecclesiastical school that grew up among the disciples of Ingres. It is obviously the result of an intention to turn away from the soft whispers of the

* More correctly speaking, oil-painting on the wall.

† Mourey wrote a detailed description of the Le Vésinet decoration in the " Revue Universelle " (November 1, 1903). Of the Sacré Cœur Chapel, he says : Une atmosphère enflammée y règne ; les rouges, les violets ardents, les jaunes sulfureux flamboient ; les orangés et les verts fulgurent ; on est dans un brasier. La Chapelle de la Vierge est un acte de tendresse humaine, la Chapelle du Sacré Cœur est un acte de foi d'une autorité mâle, d'une vigueur tyrannique. Il faut croire ici on ne pas croire, mais toute tiédeur est impossible. Je vois peu de peinture religieuse au monde qui s'impose plus victorieusement et promulgue avec plus de franchise ses convictions et sa croyance.

earlier works, religious only in so far as they suggest the perfume of incense; like Puvis, Denis had found piety compatible with delight in the noble nudity of beautiful bodies. They show a determination to serve legend with ecclesiastical forms and demonstrate the positive aspect of Christian conviction. To see Denis embarking on such a course might give occasion for anxiety, if he had not clearly shown in a large number of contemporary works his possession of the cool steadfastness of purpose of the modern, who knows exactly what he wants, and is not only religious, but pre-eminently intelligent. No Church has ever been dangerous to genius.

By way of guarantee thereof, Denis has hung a small easel picture on canvas in each of the chapels, on the wall beneath the decorations of the cupola, the sign-manual of a great personality, which, when it serves, only becomes serviceable to itself in the higher sense. They are both on a gold ground; in the Lady Chapel a *Marriage in Cana*—a very subtle choice of subject—in the Sacré Cœur a *Crucifixion*, of course. This, in spite of the small size, is an imposing work, as weighty, as intent on all a picture can give as the art which has decorated the ceiling is intent on its fitness for the given surface.

Le Vésinet will no doubt be the last church painting in France. Denis had to go to the country, to find tolerably suitable employment. There is no place for him in the bombastic splendour of the modern town-church, where pure colour is as unfamiliar as pure faith. The Sacré Cœur in Paris is still waiting for its internal decoration. But the conditions of light in this vast place are not suited to frescoes. It is true that the master's latest studies reveal a possible capacity for designing great mosaic decorations. His line has the power of retaining expression, even without the richness that the brush adds to the surface. This is evident even in the modest dimensions of his cartoons for painted glass and wall-papers, and in his outline drawings for book illustrations, even though these lack the warmth of his lithographs or wood engravings for books, such as the admirable early illustrations for the "Voyage d'Urien," and the recent ones for the "Imitation of Christ,"

In the Salon of 1903 there were, among others, two little pictures, which are full of promise for the artist's still immeasurable future: a number of naked or half-naked figures move about on the seashore in all imaginable positions, chosen with the sole intention of giving the greatest possible animation to the surface. In the centre is an abnormally large horseman; no one can imagine what he means; in the background we note other persons, on horseback, apparently as meaningless, and abnormally small. Throughout are details, rendering certain things in Nature with disconcerting exactness, and indeed, we come to be able to identify all the details somewhere in Nature, if we take them one by one.

The first moment is the critical thing in such works. Among the all too reasonable art of others, which makes no demands upon our powers of divination, we seem to be face to face with a pair of mad rebuses, for the solution of which time fails us. A certain measure of derangement is certainly necessary in the brain of the spectator. He must undertake translations, fulfil highly complicated, dark conditions, forget all sorts of things, above all, give up every hankering after meanings, and when his eye has got so far, that it does nothing but see, then perhaps, he will be able to divine fabulous things. Objects will then be found together, which obey a very remote but very definite organism, which are together not because they say this or that, but because together they dance a round of lines



PUVIS DE CHAVANNES: STUDY
WOODCUT BY L. PERRICHON (L'IMAGE)

and planes and of thoughts, which has a nature of its own, and takes from externals just what suits it, without troubling in the least about the results. In every good ballet, it is possible to note how the general spectacle is made up of extremely unnatural single movements. Degas occasionally fixed such separate movements. Out of what is purely schematic in itself a marvellously fluid, mellow general form is evolved. This schematic element has been reckoned with from time immemorial, but we have been accustomed to find it in combination with certain familiar phenomena, which present themselves as symptoms to the current conception of style. Here an isolated artist ventured to experiment with such effects, apparently without placing himself in the protective shadow of a current style. Denis' piety now appears in a different aspect. Ecclesiastical legend allowed him liberties, which freedom from convention denied. This sufficed for a while. But when, like Denis, one is not *only* pious, this incense-shrouded dance becomes too monotonous at last, and then the dance treats of things which can no longer be believed, and suddenly resolve themselves into the frivolities, which are made a reproach to him, and even more, to one so essentially an artist as Bonnard.

If one of the pictures by Denis mentioned above, could be translated into mosaic in the right place, no one would find fault with it, and Bonnard's panel with the family in the garden would not excite the horror even of fairly intelligent people, but would be generally appreciated. But such an " If " becomes a serpent without an end. For should some philanthropist afford these artists the opportunity of working in mosaic, the result would no doubt be futile, because the splendour which is produced by modern fragmentary painting would always cast that of the natural material into the shade. *

I hope to work out this problem more clearly further on. The origin of the form it has assumed in France will be explained in the next chapter. It cannot find clearer expression than in the manner in which it presents itself nowadays to the artists who alone can solve it. It is perhaps the weightiest of all problems, demanding the greatest sacrifices, and working (often subconsciously) even in the artists, who are apparently intent on a personal conception of Nature. We must examine all the great artistic personalities for it, from Delacroix and Daumier to Bonnard, and when we note the many threads by which it binds them together, we shall feel that work on the great composition of France, which culminated in Puvis de Chavannes, is far from finished. The line of classic origin, which I have tried to sketch, which originated with Poussin, was confirmed by Ingres in the nineteenth century, and handed on to others by Maurice Denis in the twentieth, is the most distinct. In Chassériau it already compounded with the modern element contributed by Delacroix; more evidently still in Puvis, the comrade of Jongkind and Manet; and most fully in Maurice Denis, who began his first wall-painting when Seurat died.

This classic line is far from the only one, though it still appears the most successful. Beside it runs another which often crosses it, seems, indeed, sometimes to melt into it, and yet diverges as widely from it as do the swarthy skins of our Antipodes from the white flesh of our women. But just as the finest types of the one race may be not merely compared with those of the other as measures of value,

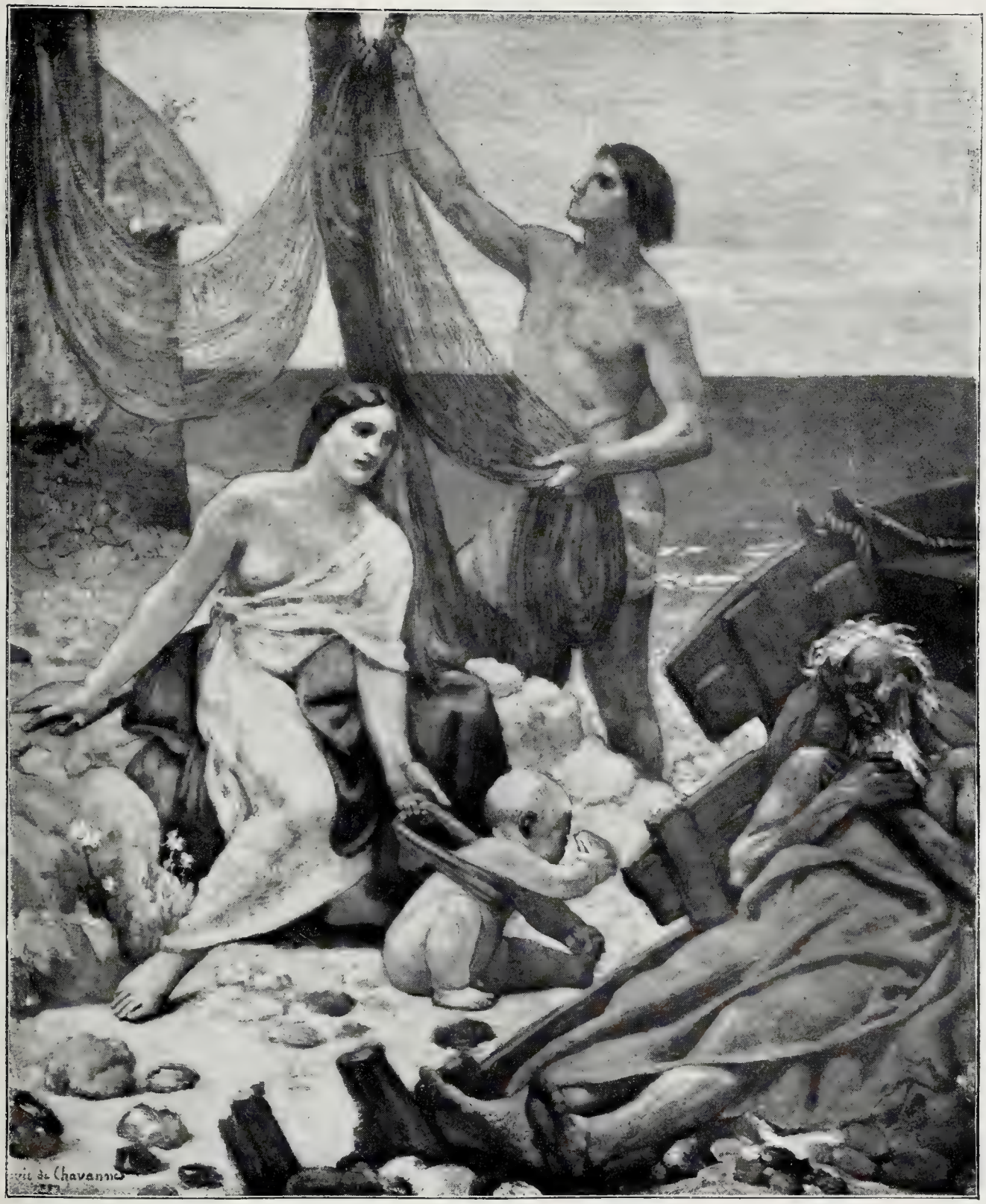
* Bing, when he first began with his Art Nouveau, commissioned Vuillard, Sérusier and others, to make designs for coloured glass. They were very artistically executed by Tiffany, but, of course, were very much less effective than a draughtsman of inferior pictorial gifts could have made them with the simplest designs. Denis alone shows some of his powers in the process.

but also form contrasts, strong antitheses of pure colour which rejoice the eye, so these currents of contrast do not move the spectator to a personal decision between one and another, but to enjoyment of the variety of this complemental phenomenon.



MAURICE DENIS.

FROM A WOODCUT IN THE "IMITATION OF CHRIST."



PUVIS DE CHAVANNES: THE FISHERMAN'S FAMILY
(FAMILLE DE PÊCHEUR)
DURAND-RUEL COLLECTION, PARIS

GAUGUIN AND HIS CIRCLE

PAUL GAUGUIN

C'est là que j'ai construit mon âme,
Dites, serai-je seul avec mon âme ?
Mon âme, hélas ! maison d'ébène,
Où s'est fendu sans bruit, un soir
Le grand miroir de mon espoir.
VERHAEREN.

THE art which lives in Denis, is, as we have seen, no reaction, but an organically enriched continuation of the classical movement. The revolutionary element lay in the school of Pont Aven, which set up its scaffolding in front of Denis ; but, as I hope to be able to show, this school again was only one of the many means, for the strengthening of a painting and sculpture subservient to closely knit composition. Either in those remotely influenced by it, or in its immediate disciples, it also flows in the great river-bed of Franco-Hellenic form-language, after helping strong spirits like Denis to accomplish their tasks in the fullest manner, and saving others like Maillol from banality.

Reactions come about, when the methods of a school fall into hands unable to make use of them. A peculiarly happy adventure was required in this case, where the healthy, vigorous doctrine of the Impressionists was at stake. Gauguin accomplished it.

His father, a Parisian journalist, a Breton by birth, had died at an early age during a journey to Lima.* His mother, a daughter of Proud'hon's friend, the Creole, Flora Tristan, the first woman who wrote Socialistic books, was born in Peru. Her boy ran away to sea when he was fourteen. He spent years between sky and water, and never quite lost his thirst for adventure. All his life he was a kind of Robinson Crusoe, and gave an interpretation to the romance, which gives a new and striking aspect to old Defoe's creation.

Returning to Paris, earnestly advised and firmly determined to pursue a sensible calling, he became the employee of a well-known banker. For the second time he showed a surprising capacity for doing well anywhere, and earned a great deal of money. Everything seemed to indicate that France was the richer by another worthy bourgeois. He married, had several children, and led an exemplary life. Then one day he found Nature again, this time in Art. He saw pictures suggestive of the yearning after sun, water and earth, and recognised in them a reflection of his own natural emotions in the presence of landscape. He went to their authors, to Pissarro and Guillaumin, found them simple cordial persons, told them about his travels, and they told him about their art. At last he began to try his own

* See the biography by Charles Morice in the "Mercure de France," October 1903.

hand at this, and still devoting the week to his business, painted on Sundays with his friends. Like Van Gogh, Gauguin " commenced artist " at the age of thirty. He was thirty-two when he first exhibited in 1880,* his first pictures being simply painted landscapes, in the manner of Pissarro. But the following year he showed, together with some similar landscapes, a nude study of a woman, in profile on a divan, mending a chemise, of which Huysman wrote that no painter had as yet struck " une note aussi véhémente dans le réel," and a wooden statue, which the critic of symbolism pronounced Gothic. †

From this time forward his tendency seemed to change. As Mirbeau rightly pointed out at an early date, Gauguin's emancipation was as swift and hasty as the preparation had been slow and deliberate : his case was like that of Van Gogh, but he lacked the Dutchman's healthy peasant blood ; his was a mixed Parisian fluid. Reaction set him against the very tendency from which he had started, against the newer Impressionism. He began to see something different, something more elemental in Manet as compared with Pissarro and Monet. Guillaumin's characteristic figures seemed to him, in spite of their vigour, a weakening of Manet's forms, and he sought behind Manet for that figural core, which appears in the pictures as an image in a glass. Degas made the decisive impression on him, by his systematic division of large planes of colour and above all, by his strong drawing. Gauguin learned from him how to express himself personally through his mise-en-scène. The essays in sculpture, which Degas exhibited just at the beginning of the eighties, may also have had a decisive influence on the younger man.

Gauguin sought to simplify Degas. It was easy to become athirst for strong external beauty in the process. The luxuriant lands he had coasted in his seafaring days came into his mind. All that Pissarro and Monet painted seemed to him artificial compared with the colours he remembered. They were undoubtedly sincere, and so, he argued, the fault must be in the model. Accordingly, in 1886, what Roger Marx calls " obéissance au génie intérieur " ‡ sent him back to Brittany. Here he saw what Van Gogh had found in Holland, big, simple mortals and an unspoilt Nature. He painted his first peasants, his first independent landscapes, but here again his personality was still struggling in the Impressionistic current ; he was only able to show his difference from the rest in shades, and despaired of ever equalling them. Once more he sought to improve his expression by a change of models ; his Breton sojourn was interrupted by a journey to Martinique in 1887. He returned in 1888, his eyes full of pictures, which he was scarcely capable of putting upon canvas. His friends fêted him at the exhibition held in Boussod Valadon's galleries. Roger Marx owns one of the finest works of this period, *La Baignade*, two nude figures in an enchantingly lovely woodland setting (painted in 1887). Gauguin had seen a new world, new colours and forms, and felt certain of one thing—that anything was possible to him rather than Pissarro's reflective

* He was born in Paris on June 7, 1848.

† Huysmans on the Exposition des Indépendants, 1881 (reprinted in " L'Art Moderne," Stock, Paris), an elaborate and enthusiastic hymn of praise to Gauguin, proclaiming his future greatness unhesitatingly ; it suffers somewhat from the fact that it is obviously aimed at the arch-enemy, Courbet. Huysmans' enthusiasm had cooled, however, by the following year (see Appendix to " L'Art Moderne ").

‡ Voltaire, February 20, 1891. See also Marx' essays in the " Revue Encyclopédique " of September 15, 1891, and notably the study on Gauguin in the number for February 1, 1894. Finally, Mirbeau's essays and those by Aurier, collected in the " Œuvres Posthumes " already quoted (" Le Symbolisme en Peinture and Les Peintres Symbolistes ").



MAURICE DENIS: THE ORCHARD

STERN COLLECTION, BERLIN

art, the portraiture of Nature. He now made up his mind definitely in favour of Cézanne and Manet, whose *Olympia* he copied in his own manner about 1888.

It was about this time that he went to the South of France. Van Gogh had at last persuaded the friend he had found in Paris in 1886 to come to him at Arles. The meeting of these two lonely souls, each at the psychological moment of his development, resulted in a drama, the external circumstances of which were determined by their abnormal temperaments; its internal history may have been still more poignant. It closed with the horrible catastrophe Gauguin has himself recorded, giving the narrative a shade of his hidalgo-manner which it is not easy to forgive.*

According to Gauguin, it was Van Gogh who profited most by their acquaintance. But the statement that Vincent was still at the time in the full flood of Neo-Impressionism, from which Gauguin "saved" him, must be received with a certain amount of caution. To Gauguin, who always preferred a smooth surface, Van Gogh's very arbitrary division, *i.e.*, his brush-stroke, may have seemed the property of Seurat, whereas it was, as a fact, peculiarly Van Gogh's characteristic means of expression. At any rate, we can scarcely suppose that at Arles Vincent was still working in the extremely relative Neo-Impressionism of the Paris days, for this was abandoned as soon as the South gave him yellow.

It is probable that each gave something to the other, perhaps chiefly because the individuality of each was confirmed by the daily friction of inevitable contradiction. Van Gogh, however, always retained the greatest reverence for his older comrade. It is characteristic of him, that in a letter he wrote to Gauguin shortly before his death, he addresses the latter as "Maître," and no less characteristic of Gauguin, that he could not refrain from mentioning this detail in a letter to Morice.

In any case, it was during, or shortly after his sojourn at Arles that Gauguin painted the most important pictures, from the colouristic standpoint, of his European period, such as the remarkable yellow Christ, now belonging to Schuffenecker, and others in which the Gauguin synthesis developed more and more distinctly. He went back to Brittany from Arles, and here a circle of disciples soon gathered round him, who grew into a school, and helped him to live, supplementing the generosity of the worthy Theodore van Gogh.

Was it the effect of his narrow means, or did he feel, in spite of all encouragement and stimulus, that he could never achieve complete fruition here? He suffered from Europe and longed to be back in the tropics. His friends took pity on him. Maurice Denis and Lugné-Poë brought him to the notice of the modern symbolistic poets, Verlaine, Moréas, Aurier, Charles Morice, Retté, Stuart Merril, Julien Leclerc, &c., who saw in his painting a curious repetition and fulfilment of

* Van Gogh was irritated into one of his most violent attacks of mania, by living with his friend, with whom he disagreed on many points, and whose whole individuality, setting aside his art, was the exact opposite of his own. One evening, as Gauguin tells in a recent manuscript addressed to Fontainas, he flung his glass at his friend's head in a tavern. Gauguin retreated, and on the following morning told his remorseful comrade that he should prefer to quit Arles, and that he should tell Van Gogh's brother Theodore about the matter. Vincent said nothing, but in the evening he attacked Gauguin in the street with a razor. Gauguin managed to restrain him, whereupon Van Gogh went home, and cut his own ear off at the root. Gauguin slept the night at an hotel, and the next morning found his friend's house besieged by a mob, which had heard of the event. He sent for a doctor, and left the city. Van Gogh was taken to the hospital, and afterwards to the lunatic asylum at Arles.

their most secret purposes. The fraternisation of poets and painters was inaugurated, afterwards so beautifully celebrated in the Théâtre d'Art, for which Bonnard, Sérusier, Vuillard, and Maurice Denis painted the decorations. On May 21, 1891, a performance was given at the Vaudeville, the foyer of which was decorated with pictures by Gauguin, for the joint benefit of him and of Verlaine. Verlaine, Catulle Mendès and Charles Morice appeared on the boards, Maeterlinck's "L'Intruse" was played for the first time, Garnier recited Edgar Poe's "Raven" in Mallarmé's version. The proceeds of the entertainment covered the cost of the longed-for journey to Tahiti.

Since this date, Gauguin has been in Europe only as a visitor. He left in April 1891, returned in September 1893, to offer the poets the beautiful book, Noã-Noã * and the painters the superb pictures, which Durand-Ruel exhibited in November of the same year. They had no success. The public, Durand-Ruel's customers in particular, thought the pictures extremely curious, as curious as their author, who seemed strangely out of place on the boulevard, with his remarkable costume, the blue and yellow embroidered waistcoat, the heavy rings on his fingers, the monumental stick carved by himself, and the hidalgo-like hauteur on his coarse features. The blow fell heavily on Gauguin. In Tahiti he had dreamt of the whole world at his feet, as his pupils had been at Pont-Aven. It even seemed as if the world were not inclined to repulse him as he would have wished, failing a complete triumph. He failed to interest it.

In February 1895, he had a sale at the Hôtel Drouot. As a preface to the catalogue he printed a letter from Strindberg, declining to write the introduction as requested by Gauguin, and also his own reply. Strindberg's well-chosen words barely veil the poet's indifference. He felt the wild charm of Gauguin's scenes, for he too had "an immense yearning to become a savage and create a new world," but Gauguin's world was not his. "It is too sunny," he wrote, "for me, the lover of chiaroscuro. And in your Eden dwells an Eve, who is not my ideal—for indeed, I too have a feminine ideal—or two." The man of letters is not to be suppressed, nor the question which of the two is the barbarian: the cultivated writer, lacking every relation to art, or the painter striving after form. Gauguin's answer puts the discussion on the right level, and the significance of his words is very striking when we remember to whom they were addressed: "Your civilisation is your disease," he says, "my barbarism is my restoration to health. The Eve of your civilised conception makes us nearly all misogynists. The old Eve, who shocked you in my studio, will perhaps seem less odious to you some day. I have perhaps been unable to do more than suggest my world, which seems unreal to you. It is a far cry from the sketch to the realisation of the dream. But even the suggestion of this happiness is like a foretaste of Nirvana.—Only the Eve I have painted can stand naked before us. Yours would always be shameless in this natural state, and if beautiful, the source of pain and evil. . . ."

We are beginning now to understand the deeper meaning of these words. Then, only some twelve years ago, they woke no echoes. The sale at the Hôtel Drouot realised a contemptible sum. Gauguin longed to be back in his Promised Land and rejoiced when Carrière procured him a cheap passage on the pretext of an official mission. Since then Europe has seen him no more.

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* It appeared first in the "Revue Blanche," and afterwards as a book, published by "La Plume." Morice wrote poems for Gauguin's pictures.



MAURICE DENIS: NYMPHS AMONG HYACINTHS
(LES NYMPHES AUX JACINTHES)
(WALL-PAINTING IN COUNT KESSLER'S HOUSE, WEIMAR

In his narrower significance, Gauguin is a continuation of the exotic element in French art from Degas and Lautrec; in a wider sense, he is an immeasurable extension of artistic boundaries in general. A continuation into barbarism, if you will, because he creates faces we cannot reckon as ours, because he does not restrict himself to the strange but recognised tradition given us by Japan, because he deals in and with forms the genealogy of which is not noted in our museums. He may be charged with having always wanted something else. He tells us in "Noã Noã" how he first sojourned with the Europeans in Tahiti, then in that part of the country where they rarely appear, and finally how he went into the wilderness, to be alone in an Elysian nature. Here he found courage to take a wife, not Titi, beloved of Europeans, but the chaste Tehura, who had never seen a white man. With her he shares his hut. And here an idyl unfolds itself, while in the background the old story of the conquest of the island by what we call European culture goes on. Tehura knows nothing of him, he knows nothing of her. Sex brings them nearer together. He tells her as much as he can. The child listens to him quietly and he admires her silence. Not until he has unbosomed himself completely does she speak to him in her turn, filling the old, empty European slowly with the knowledge, the legends, the poetry, the genius of the Maoris. They begin to love each other. One day he goes fishing with his neighbours. He is lucky, and the neighbours jest; when the tunny comes to a man's hook, he has a faithless Vahina at home. . . He does not think much of this, laughs with the others, but as he goes home, doubt torments him. Tehura is the same as ever; the thought of his age and of her fifteen years fills him with fear, and finally he confesses what the fish have told him. She answers not a word, rises slowly and goes softly to the door to see that no one is listening, and then she stands in front of him and prays aloud to Taaroa to save her. Mute before this naked majesty, he gazes at her, and when she prays him to strike her, because she has given him such evil thoughts, he sinks on his knees and together they offer up the fervid prayers of the heathen.

The book is not merely a unique poem in contemporary literature, a legend of the Homeric stamp; it is also the history of Gauguin's art. Here it is more welcome to the European than in the painting of the artist of Tahiti. The poem adapts itself to our language, and the vivid episodes, the names with their wealth of vowels minister to our pleasure in splendour, without forcing us into exotic forms. The spirit is European; nothing, indeed, speaks more decisively for the European than Gauguin's flight from Europe.

In painting, on the other hand, this flight seems to have carried him to the utmost limits of representation. Here it is not the story-teller sojourning among us. The charm would compel us to set sail ourselves in these strange structures and share our food with the savages. Mistrust of the uncertain stirs within us, and habit hugs the fetters of time-honoured ennui. No listener to the story, however deeply moved thereby, really believed in the strange tale; nay more, his very emotion was increased by his consciousness of sitting as he listened in the old rocking-chair of Europe. We defend ourselves against the spell. It may be true that Nirvana lies smiling at us from afar, that delights are beckoning to us, things we have not and would fain have, conditions which may have prevailed among us too, when we were barbarians, but . . .

Every one is of Strindberg's opinion now, even the boldest of those who owe their culture to literature. They love chiaroscuro, twilight facts, which are

altered by a change of illumination, the meaning of which is inspiring but obscure. When one appears who would break through the gloom and who offers us elements shining in all the undimmed lustre of their nature, they screen their eyes angrily with a hand, and judge by what they believe they see through their fingers. Of course all that remains is the detail so dear to criticism The beauty has been shut out.

For all that Gauguin has done is beautiful, though we may say it is fragmentary, though we may not always grasp its objective meaning, though we may regret that in certain large panels the harmony of colour and line is not always so pure and strong as in Van Gogh's very much simpler pictures. There is a Gauguin in M. Fayet's possession in Paris, half-lengths of three savages, so exquisitely grouped and so pure in line, so masterly in the arabesque and so fine in colour that it suggests the avatar of a lovelier, more Grecian Giotto. The grace he found upon his island, by some incomprehensible connection caused him to find not motives, but means for the representation of the naked body in Nature, means which seem to us novel, because we have so long been unaccustomed to such naïve solutions by richly endowed artists. This man, who had nothing but his eyes with him in wilds, looked himself into an ordination of forms, which people only bring into the world with them in periods of very exceptional brilliance. Had he given more, we should to-day be standing before an absolutely classic artist. Very often his fear of Europe drove him to extremes, where his power failed him ; he was all his life a self-taught genius, and in certain minutiæ we are spoilt creatures. Sometimes his planes appear tame to us, just in those passages where the brush should have been wielded like a club. Van Gogh was brilliantly inspired, when he wished to collaborate with his friend ; he was thinking of these languid planes, enframed by passages of the utmost boldness. But at times such tender, half-effaced charms spring from the languor, that we rejoice to have what we have.

Gauguin could do everything. He was a great lithographer, a great sculptor, and a skilful potter. When his medium is plastic, the danger of driving his synthesis into the barbaric is doubled or quadrupled. At the same time, the perversity of the European sometimes seduces him into making the primitive as wild and terrifying as possible.

All his life long Gauguin remained a great child, anxious to appear phenomenal at all hazards, more from a profound, fantastic ambition to be remarkable in his own eyes, than to impress others. This drove him to follow up every idea which could minister to this auto-suggestion. The artist in him took care of the rest instinctively. The unsuccessful exceptions in his work are atoned for by many splendid things, such as Schuffenecker's large relief *Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses*, of 1888, and the later and more harmonious panels belonging to M. Fayet, which are full of enchantment for those who are content to rely upon the eyes alone.

All Gauguin's sculptures are in wood or porcelain. He did everything himself, and seldom do sculptures reveal, as do his wooden surfaces, the joy of the artist in animating the material with every pressure of his hand. The eye glides over them without sinking in, and does not work, but is gently caressed.

In his ceramics, the technique of which he learned from Chaplet, the good is less conspicuous. Here he sometimes appears. not as the barbarian, but as a Parisian designer of bibelots of an exotic kind. A large proportions of Schuffenecker's once unique collection is poor stuff. The two Gauguin-lovers, Fabre and Fayet,



MAURICE DENIS: OUR LADY WITH THE SCHOOL-CHILDREN
(NOTRE DAME A L'ÉCOLE)
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

have secured the best examples, beautiful quiet planes, where the reflections harmonise with the movements, and are found in the right places.

Gauguin's complete work is immense ; a great deal of it has no doubt been lost. Much of it may adorn the huts of his friends in Tahiti, where cataloguing ceases. With the exception of Vollard, there is not a single dealer in Paris who is really interested in him. Amateurs are repelled by him, with a few exceptions. They could accept his exoticism, but the non-exotic, the primitive European strain, subservient, not to the frame, but to large planes, is acceptable to very few Europeans. What he required was what G. A. Aurier vainly demanded. Walls ! Walls ! give him walls !

Gauguin died May 9, 1903, on the Island of Dominica.*

In him Europe art lost not only a marvellous artist, but also a profound observer of its activities, who, far from severing the connection between himself and European culture, turned his leisure in the primeval forests of his new home to good account by pondering over his old one. His writings, which I shall perhaps some day

* This was the date given to Montfreid, Gauguin's executor, in a short official note from the "Administrateur par intérim des Iles Marquises." The cause of Gauguin's premature death is not at present known. He certainly did not die of leprosy, as was reported in one newspaper. Montfreid told me that Gauguin had been ill a long time, suffering from an eczematic wound in his leg, the result of breaking it in Brittany. He had also an affection of the heart, which may have been aggravated by an excessive indulgence in nicotine. His last letter, dated a few days before his death, on April 27, has been courteously placed at my disposal by M. G. Fayet. From this it appears that he was subjected to gross indignities by the French administrators of the island. I quote the original passage : "A la suite de faits scandaleux de l'administration j'ai écrit au gouverneur. Cettre lettre m'a valu une condamnation à trois mois de prison et mille francs d'amende. Je vais faire appel devant le tribunal de Papeete. Mais que de frais ! . . . Il sera dit que je passerai ma vie à tomber et à me relever pour tomber encore.

"Ces préoccupations et ces tracas m'auront la vie à bref délai" (See the extract from "La Dépêche" below).

A letter to Charles Morice, also written in April 1903, and published in the "Mercure de France" (October 1903, p. 105) agrees with the above ; it further contains a typical profession of the writer's artistic faith :

"I am on the ground, but I am not beaten. The Indian, who smiles as he is tortured, is not conquered. You are mistaken if you meant that I am wrong in calling myself a savage. I *am* a savage, and the civilised feel this, for there is nothing in my work which could produce bewilderment, save this savage strain in me, for which I am not myself responsible. It is therefore inimitable. Every human work is a revelation of the individual. Hence there are two kinds of beauty ; one comes from instinct, the other from labour. The union of the two—with the modifications resulting therefrom—produces great and very complicated richness. Art-criticism has yet to discover it. . . . Raphael's great science does not for a moment prevent me from discovering the instinct of the beautiful in him as the essential quality. Raphael was born with beauty. All the rest in him is modification.

"Physics, chemistry, and above all, the study of Nature have produced an epoch of confusion in art, and it may truly be said that artists, robbed of all their savagery, have wandered into all kinds of paths in search of the productive element which they no longer possess. They now act only in disorderly groups, and are terrified as if lost when they find themselves alone. Solitude is not to be recommended to every one, for a man must have the strength to bear it and to act alone. All I have learnt from others has been an impediment to me. It is true that I know little, but what I do know is my own. . . ."

The Toulouse newspaper, "La Dépêche," gave certain details of his end in an article by A. Leblond (October 1, 1903), which should probably be accepted with a certain amount of caution. In accordance with the anarchical character of the paper, Gauguin is depicted as a revolutionary, who fought against Church and State with ever-increasing boldness. In the Marquesas Islands, whither he went from Tahiti, he was engaged in constant quarrels with the Bishop (*cf.* another article in the same paper by Daniel de Montfreid, on October 10 of the same year). The article in the "Revue Universelle" of October 15, 1903, contains a number of errors. The most trustworthy account is probably Montfreid's study in the December number of the little periodical, "L'Ermitage" (1903).

be privileged to publish, are the utterances of one of those rare beings who are all harmony, in whom the incomplete and discordant in details reflect the vaster harmony of a manifestation embracing all existence, and not merely an individual artistic expression. His writings have shared the fate of his pictures. Very few have reached us in Europe. In the little French papers of Papeete in Tahiti, "Les Guêpes" and "L'Indépendant" he published revolutionary articles of a satirico-political character. Europe, as represented by the French colonial administration and the French missions, was Gauguin's bête noire. The spirit of his grandmother, who had worked for the natives, a deep instinctive sympathy with the dark races that was in his blood, made him look upon every European influence, especially European bureaucracy, as disastrous, and he scoffed at it whenever he could. A number of vers libres, well worth preserving, also appeared in these papers, and in "Le Sourire," which he published occasionally from 1899 to 1901.

Exhibitions, as usual, were organised after the death of the neglected artist. Gauguin's pictures appeared for the first time in a real "Salon." The autumn Salon of 1903 contained ten fine works of various periods. At the same time, Vollard exhibited fifty of the best Tahitian pictures, among them the grandiose caricature of himself with the two women, *Contes Barbares*, the inexorable protest of the great barbarian, and some two dozen charcoal drawings on white paper, perhaps more powerful still. They hung side by side haphazard, with no attempt at artistic arrangement, mingling their splendour of colour and of line. The language of these frescoes seemed to make the place larger and larger, transforming the little shop into a Pantheon.



PAUL GAUGUIN: TAHITIANS

FAYET COLLECTION, BÉZIERS (HÉRAULT)

THE SCHOOL OF PONT-AVEN

> I have lately returned from an expedition to Brittany, bearing few spoils with me. A wretched, dreary land, the people stupid and dirty. I heard not a sound of the beautiful folk-songs which I had hoped to collect there.
>
> HEINE. September 21, 1840.

GAUGUIN's influence was and is immense; setting aside the leaders of Impressionism, it may indeed be described as unrivalled. This painter, endowed with all the charms of personality, ready alike with tongue and pen, who, like his art, always suggested rather than unveiled truth, and hence wielded all the more potent an influence, became the hero of the generation which followed his own contemporaries. The manner in which Hellenism, as preserved by Puvis, had to be conquered anew, proves that artists had still no very definite consciousness of the aims which had already been realised in the Pantheon. That Gauguin's work should have been hailed as novel is comprehensible enough; but that his theory should have been received as a sudden manifestation from heaven is a riddle. It shows in what isolation the great leaders of French art had worked.

Puvis was too perfect, perhaps also he was too modest in his latest pretensions, both towards himself and others, to form a strong school at once by personal attraction; he had formulated too rapidly. Not he, but Gauguin was the sparkling light that drew the moths. This self-taught artist succeeded in making Pont-Aven, where he spent the first years of his Breton sojourn, into a second Fontainebleau.

Émile Bernard was the first of his adherents. He came from Paris on foot in 1888, and paid his way by painting portraits in return for board and lodging on the road. He discovered Gauguin the same year he found Van Gogh, with whom he had worked in Cormon's studio in Paris after 1886. He was then about 18; Gauguin might have been his father. Mistrustful of everything that came out of Paris, Gauguin refused to receive him in spite of the recommendations of Schuffenecker the painter, his first and best friend. They became friends two years later by the intervention of Theodore van Gogh, when Bernard returned to Pont-Aven after decorating his inn at St. Briac with frescoes and glass-paintings.*

Bernard followed every innovator in Parisian painting and imitated them all with extraordinary facility: Pissarro, Seurat, and most fervently of all, Cézanne. His remarkable talent seemed to succeed in everything. He composed creditable pictures when he was a schoolboy of sixteen; he was an adept in the treatment of wood, both as an engraver and carver, could weave carpets and paint glass, and his literary works offer very important documents for the history of modern art. Bernard's development is the typical progress of an artist of great mental powers but without genius: logic without inspiration. He began with neutral

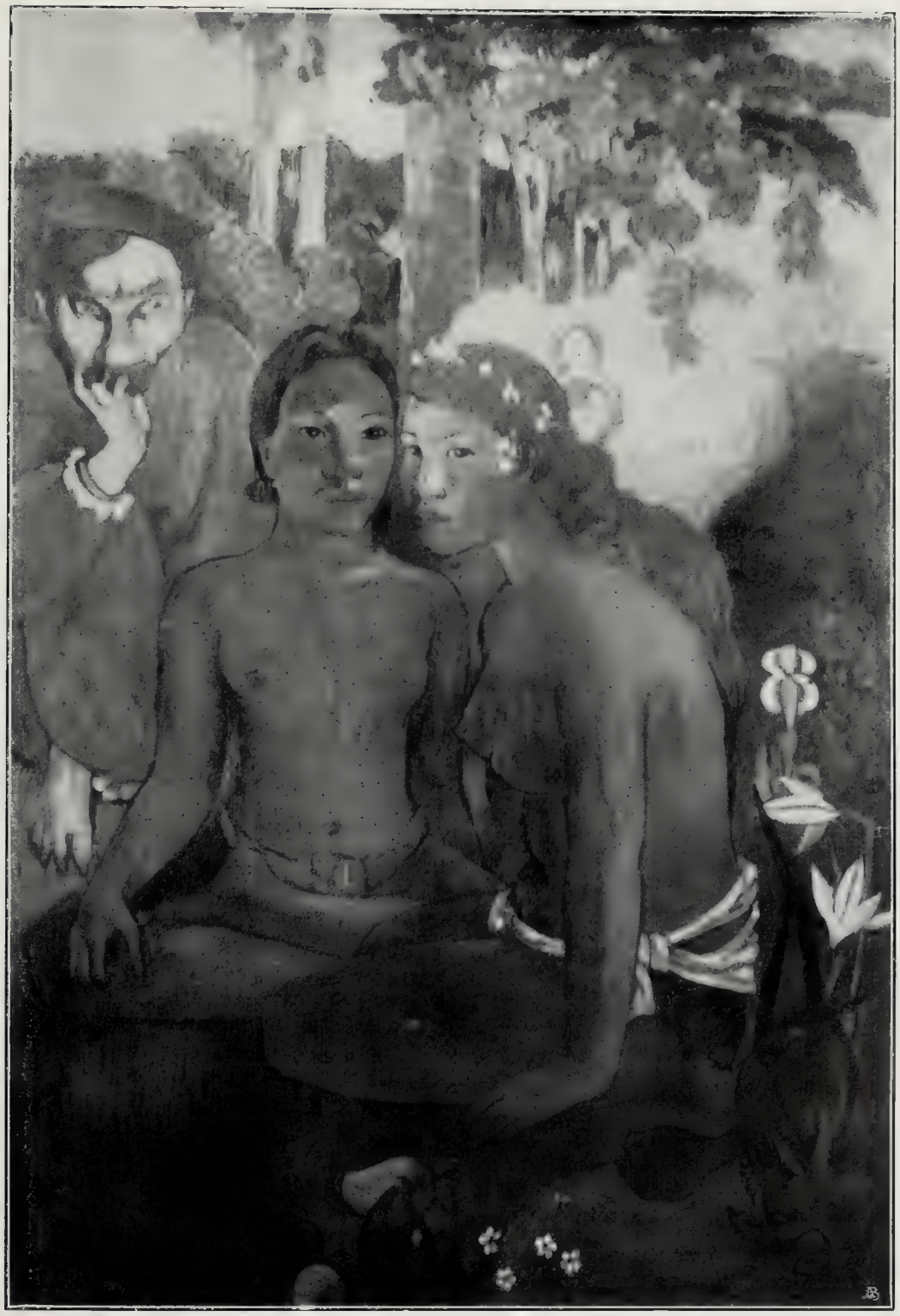
* Aurier is mistaken in attributing these to Gauguin.

pictures and suddenly approached synthesis, almost at a bound. His pictures, and more especially his lithographs of about 1888, might almost be mistaken for Gauguin's. After this he had a fancy for very archaistic drawings. In Germany he sought out the early masters, in France Jehan du Pré and Antoine Vérard, in Italy the Primitives, and under these influences he produced wood-engravings for "L'Ymagier," which might have been executed in the fifteenth century. Then he remembered that he was a painter and began to rise again by slow degrees to the pictorial idea. He shows most facility with Cézanne. The Bernards inspired by Cézanne early in the nineties are brilliant pasticci; the best is, perhaps, the *Marché Breton*, M. Schuffenecker's market-scene with the magnificent fruit and the peasant-women in their white caps—simpler, flatter, but more luminous than Cézanne. In his still-life pieces he is sometimes very like his exemplar. He too turned away from Europe; he went to the East, taking Cézanne's weapons to Constantinople, and in 1893 he painted the brilliant watercolours now in the keeping of his mother at Colombes, near Paris, where is also the rest of the artist's very extensive work. I have rarely seen better watercolours. The method consists of a few loose, almost straight strokes and lightly washed planes, and presents not only an amazing animation, but a restful norm, which one is never weary of admiring. It was doubtless his desire to enrich this norm which sent Bernard back to painting, and caused him to diverge more and more from Gauguin's ideals, even to the complete suppression of all boundaries between colours and planes. He had expressed himself with so much vigour against the complementary processes of the Impressionists and Seurat's doctrine of division, that he could not return to Pont-Aven; and so he fell into the languid, superabundant manner of his Oriental pictures. In 1892 he painted his women on the banks of the Nile, a picture full of just those respectable qualities, against the inadequacy of which Gauguin had rebelled. A journey to Spain in 1897 gave him nothing but some remarkable popular types, which he introduced inter alia in his large picture, *Chanteurs espagnols à Seville.*

Since this he has been living in Cairo, regularly sending well-painted, respectably conceived and perfectly uninteresting pictures to the exhibitions of the Indépendants and writing books of little value. One of his best pictures has been in the Luxembourg for the last few years, where it suits its position only too well, and justifies Gauguin's severe prophecy that Bernard would yet end with Benjamin Constant.

At a decisive moment Bernard exercised a certain influence on Gauguin's circle. In an open letter to Mauclair, in which he refutes the very unjustifiable attacks made upon him by that writer, * he even attempts to arrogate Gauguin's invention to himself, an attempt which shows how even in the most emancipated artistic community instincts have the same effects as in a commonplace society. A careful comparison of the works of both artists at the same date (1888) is unfavourable to Bernard's contention, even setting aside the fact that Gauguin had given the first indications of his manner some half-dozen years earlier, and had painted purely synthetic pictures in Martinique in 1887. At the most it permits the assumption that Bernard arrived more rapidly at a conscious stylistic manner, the all too facile application of which had never been desired by Gauguin. Bernard's development was more superficial, and only thus can we explain that he should have looked upon his painting at this period as in any sense a concrete invention. On

* "Mercure de France" No. 66, June 1895.



PAUL GAUGUIN: SAVAGE LEGENDS (CONTES BARBARES)
FOLKWANG MUSEUM, HAGEN, WESTPHALIA

the other hand, he may very possibly have given Gauguin an opportunity of expressing himself, and he may have promulgated the ideas of his greater friend by argument and counter-argument. He was, at any rate, the real spokesman of the circle. Whereas Ganguin never took the trouble to discuss details, never looked upon himself as the renewer of his handicraft, but always judged his art and wished to have it judged from the highest standpoint, Bernard was full of theories of painting, and often indulged in formulæ when there was nothing to formulate. In those days he was considered the boldest of the group. If courage failed the others to accept the logical consequences of their doctrines, it was he who always carried these latter still farther. His exhortations were of the greatest service to them, as they gratefully acknowledge now. Such persons are commonly more helpful to others than to themselves.

The circle increased daily after Bernard had found speech. Laval, who has since died, had already accompanied Gauguin to Martinique and shared his every thought. The landscape painter Moret joined them, and in the autumn of 1888 the most influential of all Gauguin's school, Paul Sérusier.

Sérusier took to painting somewhat late. He was born in Paris in 1864, studied till he was twenty, and then went into business at the wish of his well-to-do parents. He began to paint when he was twenty-four, and then in Julien's academy under Lefèvre, Boulanger and Doucet. There he found Denis, Bonnard, Ibels, Ranson and Vallotton. Vuillard and Roussel were working in the neighbouring studio under Bouguereau and Robert Fleury. They all honestly did their best to satisfy their masters, and gave no hint of the development which was soon to give France a new generation of artists. In 1888 Sérusier exhibited at the Salon a very dull picture of weavers at work. He came to Pont-Aven with the reputation thus acquired, and was received with the utmost distrust. He was a Salon-painter, not without means, tormented himself with futile studies of Nature, and looked upon the methods of Gauguin and his friends as rank madness. It was not till the end of his visit that he made the acquaintance of Gauguin, who was at no pains to conceal what he thought of Salon-painting in general and Bouguereau in particular, and gave him to understand in most energetic fashion that acceptable things could only be produced by exactly opposite methods. Sérusier shook his head incredulously and went back to Paris to toil at the old last. But when he saw all his friends at work again on the same patient and characterless canvases, each resembling each other and nothing else in Nature, he began to reflect. After seeing a few more pictures by Gauguin, scales seemed to fall from his eyes; he began to seek after planes, strong lines, surfaces in his pictures. The cry of revolt penetrated to Julien's atelier. Sérusier was treated as a lunatic at first, but the attack upon Bouguereau was looked upon as excellent sport.

It is important to recognise the immediate relation of all the artists who are working out the development of French painting to the school of Gauguin, although they may not have worked at Pont-Aven. Sérusier grouped together all the available elements in Julien's academy, and he himself came straight from Gauguin. Variously as these elements have developed, the point of departure was the same for all, and in the first works which show the new ideals Gauguin's influence is the common bond between the friends. For the first time, the elementary conceptions of the adornment of interiors in the great style of decoration became living ideas to these young artists. Their enthusiasm was great, it even swallowed up individual effort; all worked together, careless whether the canvas

in hand was to be distinguished from that of a colleague or not. Their chief preoccupation was to free themselves from the schools, and to oppose to the education which had taught them to go to Nature without selection, another which sent them to Art. The exhibits of the " Groupe Impressioniste et Synthétiste " at the Champ de Mars during the Universal Exhibition of 1899 decided the victory. In the middle of the false splendour, the commercial frippery of all the nations, the wanderer who strayed by chance into the Café Volpini, where the little show was held, was startled by the spectacle of a new world. The brief catalogue contained nine names : Paul Gauguin, Charles Laval, Léon Fauché, E. Schuffenecker, Louis Anquetin, Georges Daniel, Émile Bernard, Louis Ray, Ludovic Nemo (Two petroleum-paintings by Bernard masqueraded under this last pseudonym).

The lithographs of the catalogue sufficiently attest the community of the works. Here in this little café which the younger artists, Denis, Bonnard and the rest zealously frequented, the only art in the huge world's fair which was not entirely alien to Eiffel's iron miracles manifested itself.

Sérusier returned to Pont-Aven in 1889, and as the village had now become too fashionable for the school, it removed to Pouldu, where the inn in which the painters lived, and the shed in which they worked together were the only buildings.

Here the circle was increased by a few new members. Holland, who it seemed had not exhausted her resources in Van Gogh, sent the little hunchbacked sculptor De Hahn, who strove to produce his own image in the form of a little Gauguinesque gnome, and later, Verkade, who attached himself more closely to Sérusier when Gauguin left Europe. With De Hahn came Filiger, whose figures of saints in strong relief against mosaic backgrounds may still be found occasionally on the market, and Chamaillard, the enfant terrible of the group. Seguin did not join the circle till after Gauguin's first visit to Tahiti. To him we owe the spirited account of the remarkable life and work at Pouldu. *

They talked and worked each other into the paroxyms that such movements must pass through, and even went so far as to hail the infantile lispings of Chamaillard, which are hardly to be distinguished from the scribbles of an inventive child, as individual manifestations. " Don't talk to me of pictures, there are only decorations ! " cried Sérusier, shaking his tawny mane. " Peignous pour nous-mêmes et pour deux amis" said the philosophic Filiger. The ears of Monet and of Signac must have burnt sometimes ! Gauguin became terrible when he detected anything in the nature of complementary colours or essays in division. They looked at the sea to paint landscapes, and into the country to make their sea-pieces.†

They looked heavenwards too. The desire to confront Nature with a definite

* " L'Occident," 1903, Nos. 16, 17 and 18. *Cf.* also Maurice Denis' " Notes d'Art " in " Art et Critique," 1889, which sum up the ideas of the time.

† Gauguin formulated the essentials of his doctrine (Charles Morice in the " Mercure de France," October 1903). I give an abstract : " Always use colours of the same origin. Indigo is the best basis ; it becomes yellow in saltpetre, acid red (?) in vinegar. Keep to these three colours. With patience you will get all tones from them. Get light and white from your paper ground, but never leave this quite naked. . . .

Avoid black, and the mixture of black and white called gray. Nothing is black, nothing is gray. . . .

It is well for young painters to have a model, but draw a curtain before it when you are painting. It is better to paint from memory, then your work will be your own property. Who said that one



CHARLES GUÉRIN: THE PARK
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

intellectual complexity with laws of its own, an external element which might serve as the goal of temperaments too highly strung for abstractions, drove them to religion. Monet may claim to have made a number of Christian converts without much effort on his part. Landscape was replaced almost en bloc by devotional pictures. Denis, Seguin, and Verkade in particular carried this Christianity to extreme conclusions. When they had the form, they added the contents. It forced its way out beyond the form. It was a wild sort of Christianity. They ran about in grotesque costumes, more brigand-like than the Romanticists in their time. Callot might have found models among them. Red came to the fore again in costumes and pictures, as among the early masters. It was applied to everything that seemed beautiful to the eye, though not as Chevreul recommended; but they began to show less repugnance to Seurat's efforts to discover the mathematical rules of composition; Sérusier and Verkade in particular achieved results by such means. But woe to him who ventured to recommend his invention as a doctrine of universal application! Was it, perhaps, fear of the spirits he had called up which finally drove Gauguin out to the other savages?

Verkade, too, left the country. He went to Germany. Chance made the existence of the Beuron art school known to him. He contributed to the fame of this later San Marco.

What become of the other Synthesists and Cloisonnists? Anquetin, one of the most important of the group, and the most talented after Gauguin, attempted colossal pictures, the creation of a new Baroque style, essays which, though of greater importance than is now admitted, are far from results which might be of use to us in these days: fundamentally, they are retrogressions to domains already conquered. De Hahn, Filiger, Laval and finally Seguin, who had become a good critic of his circle, but a very mediocre illustrator, are dead. Chamaillard is a barrister in the provinces, Bernard paints exhibition-pictures; Fauché is trying to find a technique in a close reliance upon Renoir; Moret has approached the arch-enemy Monet closely, too closely, and has landed at Durand-Ruel's; Schuffenecker paints languid generalisations; Roy, who painted delicious little pictures of Dutch peasants has, I think, disappeared.

Time's revenges have been terrible; the boldest have become the most long-suffering of lambs. The hopes which were painted on the walls at Pouldu in the

should seek contrast in colour? . . . If this were so, one ought not to put two flowers of the same colour in a bouquet.

Seek harmony, not contrast. Go from light to dark, not from dark to light; your work is never light enough; the eye seeks refreshment in painting: give it joy, not mourning. . . .

If you repeat what another has done, you will only make a wretched mixture; it may stimulate your sensibility, but it kills fresh colour. . . .

All you do should breathe peace, the repose of the soul. Avoid animated attitudes. Let every one of your figures be perfectly statical. . . .

Give everything a distinct outline. . . .

Avoid over-finish; an impression is not so robust but that its first inspiration will be lost if we try to strengthen it with minute details. . . . Would you turn hot blood into a stone? Even were the stone a ruby, cast it from you," etc.

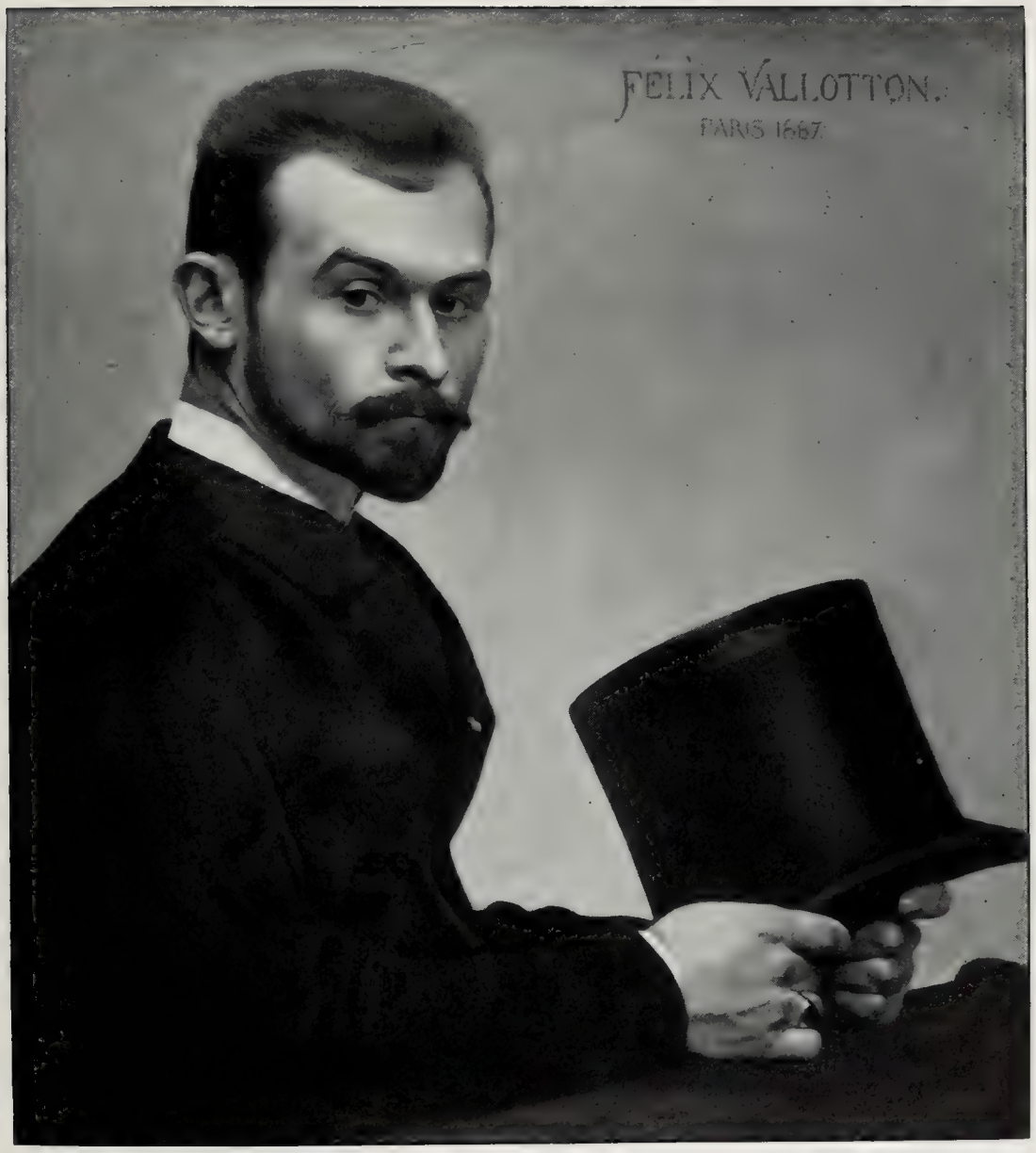
Maurice Denis has described Gauguin's influence very simply and beautifully in an article in "L'Occident" (No. 23, October 1903), written under the pseudonym P. L. Maud. In it he lays very proper stress upon the non-professional character of Gauguin's teaching. He influenced others by the strong manifestation of an irresistible instinct, rather than by the logic of his theories. It was Sérusier who contributed the logic, and Aurier who formulated it in literary form; as Denis remarks, Gauguin scarcely looked upon this formulation of his ideas as his own property, though he had been its sole source of inspiration. He always remained purely intuitive.

fieriest fashion, have been the first to dissolve into water. Only the friends of the Julien academy have held their own, and were they not supported by the academy? Sérusier, who remained faithful to the old vows the longest, his financial independence standing him in good stead, went on till lately courageously painting his dusky splendours, monumental landscapes, in which the tones are too black, with conventional figures. Lack of commissions, doubly painful for the decorator, who is unable to work without an assured destination, compels him to leave the majority of his sketches unused. Of late he has, it seems, turned to Nature as seen by Bonnard and Roussel, and has painted delicately toned landscapes, in which he experiences the reflex action of the influence he himself once exercised on his friends. What has become of these—the best of those on whom contemporary France relies—has been shown in earlier chapters.

It will suffice if history records with due emphasis that this school of Pont-Aven was necessary as such, that there was a moment when the worst heresies against the Impressionism of Monet and Signac, against the Nature of the venerated landscape painters, against all that was normal, enshrined glowing truths. Time cools faster than is necessary. French art needed this glowing furnace, not only to blow sparks out of Monet, but also to warm the creations of the aged Puvis. When he made them, they were beautiful and good, but they were not to be repeated ; with the one more line was required, with the other more colour, and Bonnard on the one hand, Denis on the other, have achieved the golden mean.

In France, every extension of the decorative programme leads back to Pont-Aven. Unfortunately, there has been but little practical result from the efforts of Denis, Ranson, Jossot and others to carry the new fruit into the domain of industrial art. Denis painted his first wall-papers in *Le Mystère Catholique*, and Ranson continued in embroidery. Jossot gave a purely ornamental form, not without charm. Unfortunately Denis found no manufacturers to take his cartoons, and happily he found something better to do.

But foreign lands too partook of the banquet. We have seen that the Swiss artist Vallotton was a guest. His early *Baignade* is a purely synthetic picture, his woodcuts, beginning in 1891, were very happy attempts to popularise the school. His compatriot Amiet, who painted the richly coloured picture, *The Invalid*, probably owed Gauguin something also. The foreigners who visited Paris, saw the successes of the school, notably at the Indépendants exhibitions, and turned them to account. Here the Belgians gained new strength ; the Dane Willumsen found courage to renew the art of his native land by Gauguin's side ; the Norwegian Munch sought forms for his enigmas here, the Hungarian Rippl Ronai his idyls.



F. VALLOTTON: PORTRAIT OF J. JASINSKY 1887

PROPERTY OF THE ARTIST

EDUARD MUNCH

> Et maintenant fakirs voilés, spectres errants entre les piliers de cette demeure, et qui, cachant vos cruelles mains, apparaissez par intervalles, révélés seulement par l'ombre rapide que vous projetez sur les murailles.
>
> VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM.

No wilder was the uproar in Pouldu, where the lonely fisherman crossed himself in terror as he rowed his boat past the lighted casements of the artist's home on the beach, than in a scantily furnished room in a quiet street of north Berlin, where the same unspeakable things were danced, drunk, and sometimes uttered early in the nineties.

What Monet was to the horde who fell upon him, gnashing their teeth, in Pouldu, Liebermann was to these others. He did not fare worse than his French colleague.

The ways of development, and more especially of artistic development, are never the shortest cuts to what seem to the retrospective eye the decisive points. They led Gauguin away into idyllic savagery. But he brought a fine stock of Parisian colours with him to Tahiti, although he chose to combine them in a fashion of his own. And he was a cultured and tender poet. Munch lacked tenderness and certain other treasures of culture. Gauguin had still something to which he clung; he sought the native type of beauty in a luxuriant island, which, though many miles of ocean divide us from it, certainly exists. Munch's Tahiti is thoroughly unreal, and yet we cannot take from him that he was sometimes able to be more convincing than our own landscape painters who give us faithful transcripts of the scenery outside our gates. What he gives us are sometimes hallucinations, but if at the time to all appearances one only studied the epopee of the little human brain, in reality one felt oneself impelled by strong forms. These forms may not always have had their origin in wholesome order. But "the depth of an artist lies herein, that his æsthetic instinct surveys the more distant results, that he does not stand shortsightedly by what is nearest to him, that in the main he affirms the economy which justifies the terrible, the evil, the questionable." What the man who had meditated on the transmutation of all values says here of the artist, should also serve criticism as a guide.

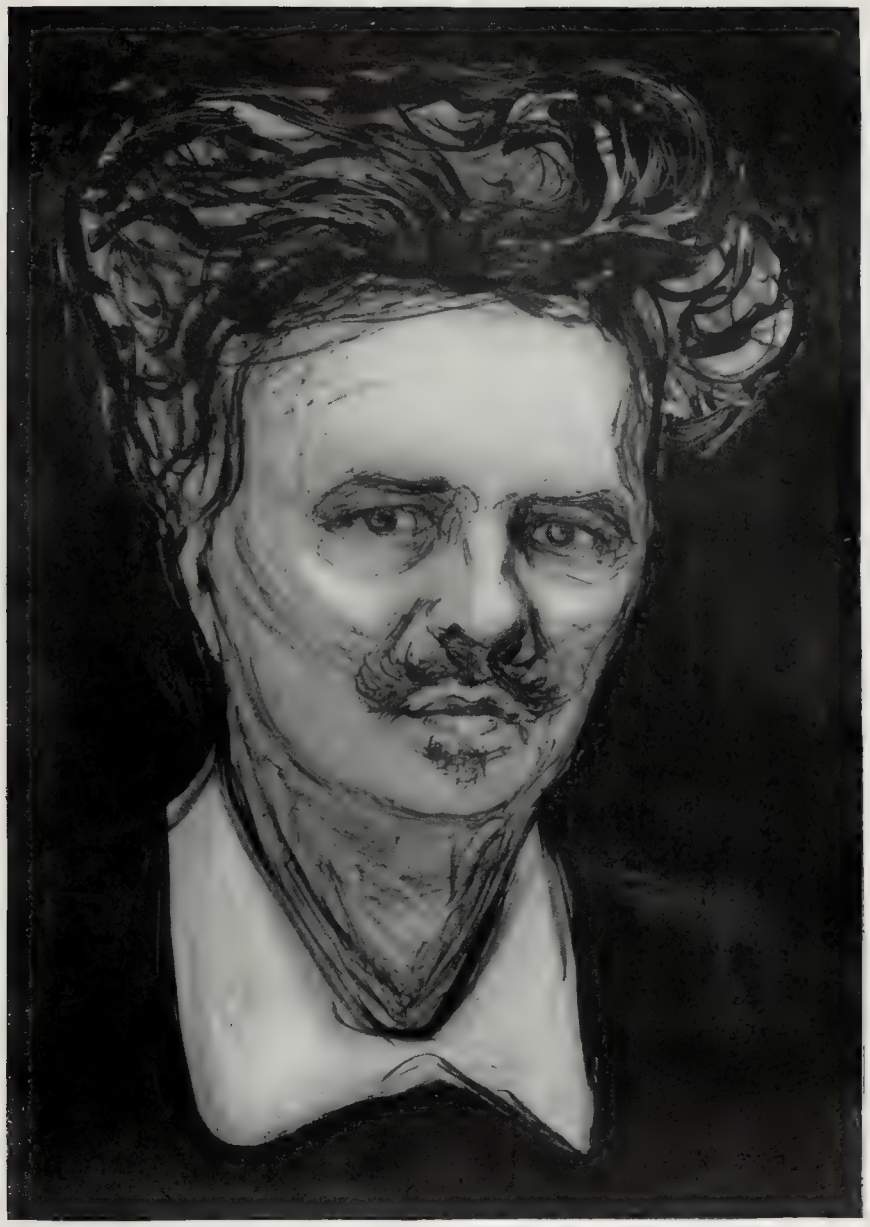
Lautrec belongs to the same sphere as Munch, and he may have been more helpful to the Norwegian than all the rest. Munch's first notable works, for instance, the woman lying by the table with glasses, his pictures of cocottes, &c., show the relation very clearly. But even in the first pictures the very differently constituted, more ponderous, gravity of the Norseman makes itself felt, the earnest endeavour to make art a profound symbol, infinitely more far-seeing than the Frenchman's mockery. In Munch's actual art, all these influences were neither more nor less dominant than in that of Van Gogh, with whom Munch may be most aptly

compared, to show the peculiar power of resistance characteristic of his race. Just as Van Gogh always remained a Dutchman to the core, even when he was copying Delacroix, so too, Munch is always the child of his people, save that what the Norwegian can create with his Northern world, and what he would fain give with the Northern fancy, does not seem so homogeneous as in Van Gogh's tempered handwriting. Compared with Gauguin, Munch seems freer, freer in his programme, though poorer in charm. He creates with what his home gives him. Gauguin may only have driven him to follow his racial promptings the more fervently.

The long list of those to whom Gauguin's sphere was of service, might be still farther extended. It shall suffice us to cite the youngest child of Gauguin's school, who promises to give that school its highest fruition.



ARISTIDE MAILLOL. DESIGN FOR TAPESTRY.



EDVARD MUNCH: PORTRAIT OF STRINDBERG
(LITHOGRAPH)

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

Maillol is the eldest of the school in years—he was born in 1861—and produced his decisive works latest—about six years ago. He remained in the clutches of a perverted system of education longer than his friends of Julien's academy, held captive by a scholarship at the École des Beaux-Arts.

Like so many of the best French artists, he came from the South. Banyuls-sur-Mer, by the blue sea, is his home. In those regions where so many marvels came to pass in early days, men are still born who are half Greeks, who pick up a piece of clay, and when they drop it, have given it form almost unconsciously. They play with it, while we rack our brains over it. They have this immeasurable advantage over others, that they speak the language of the things they fashion. This happy being needed nothing but a friendly helper to tell him where to begin, and to set his hand free. It took fifteen years. He came to Cabanel at the age of twenty-one, and painted Cabanels ; he would have painted anything else quite as readily. This went on for five years, and he had learnt just enough to make him afraid of trying anything different. He worked at painting as at something quite foreign to him, as school-work, and would have gone on painting in this fashion to this very day, had he not by chance seen a few pictures of Gauguin's. There are primitive beings who require to have Nietzsche's gospel, with which others are born, whipped into them. It seems so easy to be their own masters that they never risk it. He noticed that much the same had happened to Gauguin. He did not yet venture upon actual sculpture, although some time before, when he was painting by day, he had tried carving by night. But he took courage to work occasionally at something that amused him. This was his tapestries. Here he did exactly what he pleased. He found that the rich and aristocratic Parisians, with all their money, had not the faintest conception of good textiles, that the famous Gobelin factory had produced nothing but rubbish since the Revolution had beheaded the owners of the good receipts. In all the great city of Paris, where nothing else was lacking, there was not a single piece of pure wool. It had always an admixture of cotton, like the chicory in the coffee. He procured pure materials for himself, and showed himself more expert here than in the discovery of his teacher ; I believe he ordered them from the land of Carmen Sylva. But his chief difficulty was with the colours. It was not so much on account of the wretched drawings—with these he was not concerned—as of the dull colours, that the factory, which formerly produced such masterly works, could now only put forth contemptible things, worthy at most to serve as decorations for a Republican fête. Everything imaginable was used, with the exception of the pure material as it comes from the earth, the only thing which is pleasant to the eye, and yields rich shadows. Maillol spared no pains to find what was lacking in his own beloved district ; he knew the earth better than any Parisian. He had the greatest difficulty over yellow, the "gaude" of the ancients ; he found it one night when he had been sleeping out of doors, just under his head, in the gorgeous Reseda lute-

ola. He squeezed his red out of madder-roots, and carried on his search among all kind of barks and plants until he had completed his palette. Then he turned dyer himself, set up his frames and began to work. It is worthy of record that the only embroideries executed in France with genuine colours in the nineteenth century were produced by Maillol. The few men who cared for fine material and good technique in their tapestries—like Rippl Ronai—were his pupils. And the carpets made by the master himself—those belonging to Prince Emanuel Bibesco among others—may be reckoned among the best things in modern decorative art.

Finally, he applied the same principles to sculpture.

Art is to Maillol a question of materials. He began with pictures. Then he changed the painter's canvas for a firmer textile. Becoming firmer still, he took wood and carved it, and finally metal. He never took stone; herein lies the characteristic of his art. He is neither one of the many, who paint with tone, nor of those who hew their figures out of stone to preserve unity of form. Even Michelangelo had been satisfied with the classic comparison of the water in a bath, which gives the bather's body back to the air as it runs away. The ancients, indeed, required no intellectual representation as they carved.

With Maillol we receive a similar impression; and this comes from a method of modelling, which is directly opposed to the manner of Michelangelo. Maillol fills out his forms instead of hollowing them. The thin material of his figures overlies the mass more supply than the robe Phidias gave his *Athene*, more closely than the artistic veil about the enchanting *Venus* without head and limbs in the Thermæ at Rome.*

Only among those marvels of early Grecian art which rose under the gaze of the great Sphinx, do we find kindred phenomena.

It seems almost criminal, to speak of a young and unknown man in a connection which gives him importance apparently impossible to justify. But it would hardly be less so, if, standing before the *Rameses* at Turin, we could not retain our admiration for the thousand art-activities of the thousands of subsequent years in front of which this black stone and kindred works, these forefathers of all art, go like priests before their congregation. All that comes after seems weak and imperfect, measured by the lofty greatness of these stones. What after-generations sought to lay hold of in changeful contest, the highest power, the highest charm, seems happily blended in these figures, more god-like than any subsequent gods of stone.

There is no more serious task for the man of culture in these days, than the deep and organic realisation of this relative aspect of all appreciation. The famous asses' bridge, which deprecates comparison because "it is something else," does not lead to maturity; in these days, when we have lost the power to be one-sided and our utterances are controlled by our own personality, the criticism which does not lose sight of the vast development of the whole in its appreciation of a part, will be the salvation of the future. We can only advance by evolving the one-sided again from our many-sided activities, a rich criterion, which grasps and orders all phenomena from one visual angle. This difficulty is immeasurable, and it is not to be solved by smooth formularies. What words have power to bind the thousand things together, that they may no longer appear as logical contradictions, but as correlated things? Only art can do this, a rich creation

* Plaster feet have been added now. Our illustration shows it before this restoration.



RAMESES II
TURIN MUSEUM

which repeats in small all that is great, and at least offers perfect indications, when strength and space are lacking for the whole.

As a contribution to this knowledge, as a critical instinct, this young Maillol seems to me to have genius, not so much as the creator of the sculptures which bear his name, but as the manifestation of an instinct for things we most conspicuously lack in this generation, an instinct which finds expression without calling the rest of our heritage in question.

He does not play with a style as did the English Pre-Raphaelites. Maillol does not seek an Egyptian or a Greek form, in order to make something new—and necessarily antagonistic—out of it. If he seems archaistic at times, this is an effect of his immaturity, unable as yet to free the law from its husk. If involuntarily we think of antique things when we see his sculptures, things such as the magnificent *Throne of Venus* in the Ludovisi collection, and then are naturally unfavourably affected by the difference in capacity, we yet feel a distinct hope that this rich and natural talent will succeed in accomplishing the highest purpose.

We are justified in this belief by the fact that subjectively Maillol works quite independently. He has never seen either the *Rameses* or the *Throne of Venus*. He went to the Louvre, and I believe, that the mere sight of some mediocre little clay figure of the Greek period sufficed to open his eyes. Race speaks its unquenchable language in him, and the sight of the reliefs on the Fontaine des Innocents may have given him as truly Egyptian an inspiration as if he had been in the Turin Museum.

For this Egyptian element still lurked in the Romanesque tradition. It was audible, a still small voice, in the Goujon of the reliefs. Is not Maillol's relief like an echo of this lost voice ? There, where Goujon was thinking of the style of the time, he seems to have given himself up to the greater, higher, older style, which broadens the mass and concentrates power.

Relying on the understanding which will, I trust, be brought to bear upon these lines, I have ventured to group the examples I have quoted above together in my reproductions. If we compare Maillol's wooden statue with the *Venus* relief, or the *Rameses*, we see at once what is lacking in the modern example. It is not archaism which is his danger, not the approximation of a man of to-day to the art of thousands of years ago. There is no trace of this dreaded archaism. Nature speaks so convincingly in these forms that a slight effort of fancy will suffice to evoke the models for this sculpture in flesh and blood. On the other hand, Maillol is unsatisfactory in certain details, the feet of the wooden statue, for instance, which grow out of the stuff in an awkward manner, and do not stand perfectly, and the junction of the hand and arm, where there is a hollow between the body and the hand. The gesture of this hand, too, as it pulls the stuff together, is insignificant. We should like to see the limb closer against the body, making this more compact, as in the lateral relief of the *Throne of Venus*, where the space round the figure and between the limbs is as beautiful and as harmonious as the body itself, and no arbitrary touch, however slight, disturbs the nature of the whole ; and in a still higher degree in the *Rameses*, where complete dematerialisation of the stone is achieved by the inimitable unity of the material. This solution of the material, the highest achievement of art in the time of the Egyptians, remains unaltered though what was accounted the highest may have changed a thousand times. In such a perfect work does not perfection make its effect

felt beyond all styles and periods ? Could we not live more contentedly with this relic than with the inconsequences of our own times ?

Thus Maillol's details are, as a fact, not Egyptian enough, *i.e.*, not near enough to this perfection. If he had worked like these his prototypes after his own fashion, that is to say, had he absolutely followed out those rules which he divined, he would have been happier.

It is scarcely necessary to say that he would not have become either more or less Egyptian on this account. For this is not an ethnographic question. It turns upon a law which the same nations have interpreted in perfectly different ways, and which cannot therefore be used as an illustration of the differences between them. Rodin touched upon it when he said that sculpture is the art of bosses and hollows.

In the section devoted to French sculpture I attempted to show how it has hitherto been dealt with. Maillol has contributed the novel element in this development, and this gift does not lose in value, if it proves to be of great antiquity. He is perhaps the first Frenchman since the Gothic artists who shows no trace of the Baroque. No zephyr could flutter the scanty folds of his draperies ; the rhetoric that lies in these limbs does not rely upon outspread fingers for emphasis. Nothing is rounder than what Maillol understands by roundness. There are no strongly marked divisions between the limbs. The law of the economy of material seems to create new beauties here. His bodies are always in complete repose ; he prefers the standing attitude—the primitive pose of the Greeks—or one in which the figure is calmly seated. No drama clouds his serene brows, no excited muscles disturb the clear convex surface. It is only in the luxuriance of the gently animated contour that a secret life breathes.

Compared with Gauguin, Maillol is a sage. Gauguin, like all the men of his generation, was a vigorous fighter. He irritated people with a deliberately primitive form, and purposely over-emphasised his healthy tendency, as if to enable his disciples to hit the mark by a slight retrogression. Maillol discards those symbolical elements which Gauguin does not always succeed in resolving into his materials ; he withholds all that might disturb perfect symmetry. The civilisation of pure culture is evolved from the beauty of the savage. Gauguin too felt a deep reverence for the art of the Pharaohs, but he loved it more in the rigid hieroglyphics, and he sometimes concealed his quarrel with the world in these stiff, enigmatic forms. Maillol loved the gentleness of this antique greatness, which also enchanted the Greeks ; which reappeared in the Renaissance in a Mino da Fiesole and in certain painters, in Lorenzo di Credi, in Leonardo, which we admire in Ingres, the enemy of the play of muscle, in whom it had become tenderness, and which finally we find in Maillol's friends, in Odilon Redon and Maurice Denis. This distinguished him from all the comrades, who were inspired by Gauguin's sculpture, among whom the little Spaniard, Durio, once gave considerable promise, as did Lacombe, who carved a remarkable bed. They nearly all lapsed into Gothicism, though they could not become Gothic. It now seems easier in France to go back two thousand years, than to overstep the eight hundred that separate us from the time which produced the woman with the mantle and head-cloth in the porch of Rheims Cathedral.

Maillol exhibited his first plastic essays in the Salon of 1896, twenty figurines and little reliefs in one of the glass cases assigned to objets d'art. To the same time belongs a relief of two melancholy figures, Christian in conception.



RELIEF FROM THE THRONE OF VENUS

LUDOVISI COLLECTION, ROME

Since this, despondency has given way to a glad consciousness of victory. A new, joyfully transfigured soul has informed the works of the last few years, refreshing us with its purified gladness.

The honour of inclusion among the sculptors exhibiting at the Salon first fell to his share in 1903. When Rodin, who had the casting vote of the Jury, awarded the best place in the garden of the Champs Elysées exhibition to the relief here reproduced, he acted with admirable generosity, even from the French point of view. For in so doing he perhaps himself laid the stone, from which the future will rise to resist the crushing remembrance of his creations, and to replace an unattainable art by a richer harmony. He too, as I learned at Turin, stood before the great *Rameses* deeply moved, and what he once said in the Louvre admiring an early Greek Hera-torso sounds like a prophecy: "We are too uneasy, too agitated to-day. But we shall return to this art of vigorous health, and this will become the art of future centuries."

Should this significant prophecy be fulfilled, Maillol will have contributed his part to the consummation, and the great master of the little school of Pont-Aven who encouraged him, will also claim some of the honour.

GEORGE MINNE

If it can be said that there is any reaction against the historic current, the main tendencies of which are outlined above, it cannot be said that it has been at all dramatic in detail. It has had no personal significance in the destinies of individuals; its victory did not compel the adherents of one theory to adopt another. It took place in generations and countries, but individuals, and even countries, were spared. Its exponents were naturally found in nations, which had not already committed themselves too far, in whose conceptions of form there were still living impulses capable of expansion, or which had not yet found a place among the moderns, and seized the opportunity to join the movement. Unencumbered by the baggage of tradition, they even forced their way to the head of the column.

We have already seen what fruit Neo-Impressionism bore in Belgium and how it gave a new palette without compromising the strong native bent of the youthful country towards line. Here, in the country of Constantin Meunier, a young sculptor broke with the seductions of the new enchantress and, absolutely single-handed, brought his art back to ideals at once new and old. This was George Minne.

It is a pity that the Parisian circular inquiry into the relative merits of painting and sculpture was not addressed to this quarter, where it would have received no ambiguous answer. It is true that no one would have understood that answer, least of all the Parisian clique who started the inquiry.

The vehemence of Minne's assertion is indeed almost inexplicable, and though of course there is a natural explanation, it appears still more remarkable when one discovers that Minne in his early work, in the recumbent group of the *Man with the Dog*, in the *Mother and Children*, in the *Petit Blessé*, was by no means so very far from Rodin. The explanation of this is that he had perceived the Gothic element in Rodin whom he continues to resemble even in the much later sketch of the two men for the Volder monument. This, however, is only true of the sketch: the completed work, which I was fortunate enough to see before it was destroyed, would not have recalled Rodin.

This fact is of great importance, for a mere synthesis of Rodin's peculiarities, however daringly attempted, would never have produced the mature Minne. Minne is related to the Rodin of the *Bourgeois de Calais*, of *Ugolino*, of *La Misère* (the prototype of Minne's recumbent man with the dog), of the old woman *Celle qui fut Heaulmière*, and so forth, in short, to the mediæval element in Rodin as opposed to the Greek and Latin elements. It would be impossible to describe even Rodin's mediæval phase as purely Gothic; but in these works the sum of the qualities which approach Gothic art seems to outweigh the sum of all the rest. Minne, on the other hand, was dubbed Gothic almost from his first appearance, and this condemned him for many people; he appeared to lack precisely that



TORSO OF VENUS

MUSEUM OF THE THERMAE, ROME

which prevents one from calling Rodin's art Gothic—those elements, in short, which transcend Gothic.

Minne certainly has not that originality which we admire in Rodin, which passes all words to describe, and which it is all but impossible to bring within the compass of a definition. His merits are of an entirely different order ; a different destiny guided the course of his art. Compared with that of his contemporaries his art seems poor in achievements, undistinguished by the magnificent, ever-changing series of triumphs which we admire in Rodin no less than in other great artists. It seems at first sight to move in a narrow path where all that makes the others great must be renounced. There are striking external peculiarities in his work which still further emphasise the contrast. A marked characteristic of Minne's sculpture is that it is not transportable. We have seen that it is always difficult to choose a site for Rodin's figures, and an idea has grown up that as they have no definite place, they may be placed anywhere. We are delighted to take them as they come ; they give the highest pleasure they are capable of yielding in exhibitions and galleries, where one's mind is already intolerably excited by a wild medley of artistic sensation. Minne comes very badly out of such an ordeal. In the Expositions des XX at Brussels and later at the Libre Esthétique his statues always produced the effect of doleful notes of interrogation which aroused the indignation of the bourgeois because they seemed mere excesses of eccentricity. There was so little in them of what people had been accustomed to see in others that they regarded their author as a demented seeker of originality at any price. This was hardly to be wondered at, for how could one so different from all the rest fail to seem abnormal ? Our vast artistic caravanserai is the last place where Minne can be understood. Only in one exhibition has it been possible to appreciate him properly. This was a few years ago at the exhibition of the Secessionists at Vienna where many an exhibitor has made a fortunate venture. Here one could see and enjoy him simply because he was exhibited in a small room reserved specially for his works ; the fountain * was arranged *as* a fountain, and his figures, placed in niches, were brought into some sort of a relation to the room. Here it was possible to judge him.

The Vienna of the Secessionists perhaps found Minne hard to swallow. People had been believers in Khnopff, in whom an " indefinable something " had compelled attention, that " something " which the snob never fails to detect alike in the cut of a pair of foreign trousers and in an alien work of art, and which he calls originality. They had accepted Meunier's earnestness with much enthusiasm and perhaps with equally little understanding. Meunier's nude was " not beautiful in the traditional sense, but it was serious, had a social significance, was a sign of the times, &c. &c." But Minne's had absolutely no message for them ; it provoked no train of thought ; it had no drama either high or low, no edifying detail, no originality. What, then, had it ?

Did not something like an answer to all those questions which rustled like bat's wings through the beautiful temple where the fountain stood, come from these white figures, from the sense of divine peace and eternal seclusion from the

* Compare my article in "Ver Sacrum," 1901, Part II., with many plates. The fountain will now find a permanent home in the Osthaus Museum, at Hagen, where it will be set up in stone in a place worthy of it, and as far as possible suitable, though a park would of course have been better. The same museum has also several of his later works, among the bust here reproduced in woodcut, *The Orator*, &c.

world with which their limbs are instinct? I have seen ingenuous persons enter alone and receive a deep impression, that is to say, they had no clear idea of the why or the wherefore of what they were seeing. They then looked round anxiously to find some acquaintance, and it was only when they had found one that they were able, by a joint effort, to break out into the ugly discord of indignation.

Minne represents a victory over his own originality, the severest self-discipline, the raising of ambition to a higher plane. There was something of the same kind in the air at Vienna about this time. In this very exhibition, in which the first attempts at modern architecture were exhibited, there were traces of it in other things also. There was a sense of longing for something impersonal and therefore personal in a higher sense—an impulse towards some common ideal, towards conventions which would curb the excesses of self-conceit, towards peace. That is Minne's goal also, and for him the goal is more important than the means of reaching it. His putative archaism is a secondary matter, as also the question whether his detail is beautiful. His dreams are haunted by the beauty of the wonderful figures which adorn the portals of Northern cathedrals, and are lovely where they are. He dreams of architecture in sculpture. These are dreams which are new and yet old; ideals which have been forgotten since the passion for colour has extinguished all considerations relating to pure sculpture; but necessities of life now that we have discovered how poor we have become for all our art and all our originality.

It was this that gave actuality to the Flemish peasant's son who excogitated his figures near Bruges and far from all influences of culture. But he was no momentary phenomenon, he is more than one who understands his age. He worked long in this manner, and long before people began to quarrel about ornament, he wrote his theory of ornament at the price of a decade of hunger and misery. He evolved his strict programme quite informally as others have done, with a sort of conscious unconsciousness, save that he was not governed merely by the suggestions of his handicraft; he remembered everything that the others had forgotten. His first works were illustrations of archaistic poems, and his drawings show a more convincing simplicity and sincerity in their ancient garb than the poems themselves. It was no accident that he chose the books of his countrymen, Verhaeren and Maeterlinck, to illustrate. His larger drawings show, perhaps, more of the characteristic traces of this archaism than he himself intended or desired. Nothing more profoundly Gothic can be imagined than the kneeling couple in their flowing garments who clasp hands in a passionate longing for the forbidden; it would be impossible to find in any Gothic artist so much personality, such a lofty conception of suffering. Minne in his early days was a perfect virtuoso of pain. Nothing can be more pitiful than the emaciated bodies of his heroes, whose bones seem to bend under the burden of their sorrow, as if many generations had borne it.

In spite of the fact that he has represented a definite class of men in quite a definite manner, which was hardly known in sculpture before, Meunier has nothing of that mere strangeness which gratifies curiosity quite independently of its artistic appeal. He is also protected from temptations by a self-imposed convention with which, as we saw, Millet had something to do. We may justly rank Meunier high, but, compared with Minne, he is not quite free from a tinge of sentimentalism which, even in the case of Millet, produces a disturbing effect on sensitive modern



ARISTIDE MAILLOL: WOODEN STATUETTE
VOLLARD COLLECTION, PARIS

nerves. With Minne we are safe from this, and yet his tragic elements are infinitely more poignant. Meunier represents Labour ; his figures bear the stigmata of their work sturdily. They are no mere victims of misery ; what they lack in fat they make up in muscle ; they are heroes of toil who, even when they crouch on the ground, have a dignity of their own. Minne's embodiments of misery lie trampled in the dust ; they represent the despair of the atom before the savagery of Fate, man crushed beneath the final blow. Vigeland is the only other artist who produces a similar effect, but his drama is more emphatic, and he occasionally strays into literature. The psychical interest predominates ; not so much so, indeed, as to crowd out the artistic interest, but enough to compromise the purity of the monumental effect. Vigeland forces us to pursue some train of thought, but we never want to know what psychical impression Minne wishes to produce, we are content to admire the beauty of his lines. Some of his groups attain the rigid beauty of plastic ornament. This is the effect produced by that wonderful recumbent figure of the man with his arm round the neck of the dog which lies beside him. The group, composed entirely in horizontal lines, rises in abrupt terraces from the ground to the body of the dog and thence to the body of the man. Each movement, each line in the dog has its counterpart in the man's body. Whatever point of view we choose, this play of line seems more varied, always quiet, always interesting, finding its climax in the wide curve of the back. His powers of expression are at their height in the early drawing of the mother with the naked child at her breast, and the girl by her side who is kissing the child's foot. In this fine plate, with which the periodical " Van Nu en Straks " introduced Minne to a narrow circle of art-lovers, the future master stands revealed. One can hardly talk of Gothic, although the outward relation is still evident. We feel that we are in the presence of an independent constructive artist who can no more be summed up in the term " Gothic " than can Maillol in the term " Greek." The archaism of Minne's book-illustration, which sought out the primitive even in the principle of its technique, retires into the background. Perhaps his conventions—the draping of his figures in long swathing folds (carried to an extreme later in the *Holy Women*, which are veritable Gothic wood-carvings) and the oblique lines of the whole group—may be described as Gothic in a much wider sense. In this drawing he reveals himself already as a master of contour. Save for the dishevelled tresses of the Virgin, which might well have been dispensed with, the whole composition is mere outline and has a plasticity only to be attained by a hand accustomed to the chisel. One always imagines this group in stone, never in line. The quality of individuality we expect in a modern drawing is freely sacrificed to the outline. Yet the picture floods the soul like a great wave, sweeping into it what no pen could have described, the majestic misery of the three figures, the sombre intensity of their grief. And yet the hand that holds the pencil is calm ; we are not invited to concentrate attention on any one detail which reveals individuality ; our impulse is rather to hold the print away, not because the technique makes it necessary—there is no division, no impressionism—but because we desire to enjoy the effect in broader surfaces.

Many years ago, when Minne showed Rodin some photographs of his works, the master could not understand how so young a man could have completed so many large sculptures ; he was much astonished when Minne confessed that they were really all on a small scale. In Rodin's case the reverse effect is produced ; one always wishes his things were smaller so that one could take them up in one's

hand in order the more easily to penetrate every corner of their charm. For the centre that attracts us lies in the folds, and there is a new centre on every side.

Minne's modelling has no such foci ; it does not compel the eye of the spectator. The gaze on which Rodin casts an irresistible spell, rebounds from Minne's statues ; it would almost seem as if he deliberately intended to repel it. Not that there is any physical repulsion ; Minne is not ugly—Rodin deals in much uglier things—but because this non-arresting quality allows the eye to pass on to another field of vision. Rodin dreams of uniting his sculpture with the surrounding atmosphere, at making his figures melt into space. Minne defines the outlines of his as sharply as he can ; for him the natural, uncompromising difference between the stone and the surrounding air is in itself a means. He has no desire to transform his solids into fluids ; he tries, on the contrary, to make the contrast heighten the effect of space. His aim is felt as much in things extraneous to his work as in the work itself. He is following the instincts of ancient religious art, which referred the gaze from the picture to a higher world, to space, to the Church, to the Universe, to God.

Minne's derivation from Rodin impoverishes the effect of his work. Rodin's is an opulent genius which unites in itself all possible charms, whose taste is almost as unerring as its creative force is strong, which can almost conceal its sins against law behind the force of its emotion. Minne has no such power ; not only is his form organically poorer, but he fails to make the most of it. His inventive gift is a tiny rill compared with the torrent of creation poured forth by the author of the *Porte de l'Enfer*. And yet, poor as he is in some respects, he is capable of much. Few monuments in our time have so much dignity as the two men of the unfinished memorial to Volder, to which I have already referred. The group was intended to glorify a subject of contemporary interest—the self-help of the modern worker. It commemorated the founder of the parti ouvrier in Brussels. We can imagine what an anecdotic artist of the old school would have made of it. Meunier, on the other hand, would have produced a finely-designed group of puddlers without any particular reference to the motive of the composition. Minne's idea might have occurred to the sculptor of the *Balzac*. Two naked men are shown on a rolling ship, the outlines of which are only faintly suggested ; they clasp each other by the arms for mutual support. The symbolism is very fine and as comprehensive as possible. There is no trivial realism about it ; no obvious drama. The clasping of the hands, which is the only external piece of action, is no more distinct than Rodin himself would have made it. This annoys the Philistine ; for him all the beauty of the work cannot atone for the fact that the two figures are not really supporting each other, as their hands do not clasp, but merely lie on the respective arms. Rodin would have given an inner meaning to his design, finding for it an expressive form with as much individuality as he could put into it. He would have created two citizens of Calais, as rugged as his *Victor Hugo* or his *Balzac*, with monstrous limbs and monstrous gestures ; suggesting less the outward than the inward grasp ; he would have given us a mixture of many emotions in one form which remains open in order to take us in, and to unite our emotions with his own.

Minne's form is much more tense ; it is well-guarded on all sides. He does not reverse the methods of Rodin, nor does he replace the naturalness of the great master by an exotic conventionalism. The mathematical principles of which the French sculptor had but a dim idea and against which it was his nature to revolt,



ARISTIDE MAILLOL: RELIEF IN PLASTER

VOLLARD COLLECTION, PARIS

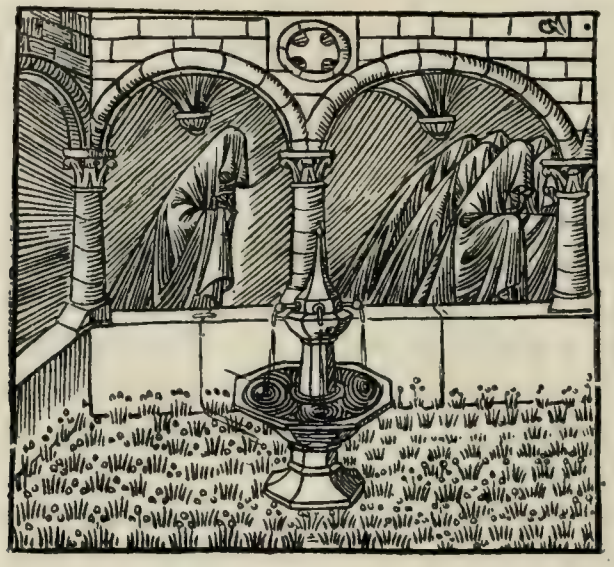
force the Fleming to the evolution of a formula which is attainable only through symmetry. Minne, so to speak, takes one half of Rodin's art and constructs another half to suit. The result of this is not only that he is restricted to a mere fragment of Rodin's resources; he is also compelled so to arrange his first half that its real completion consists in duplication. In order to limit the parts of his design, he is compelled to simplify the complication which in Rodin's works pervades the matter with an inexhaustible charm. His eye seeks for such fundamental lines of a body as may reveal the type. He has worked on this plan from the small *Petit Blessé* down to the *Fountain*. Meunier's type is a profile whose applications are limited in advance; Minne's is an abstraction of the most catholic character. His figures are no longer dressed in the usual convenient costume; they are almost always naked. When they are clothed the body vanishes; the dress becomes the body, an organic thing. The two figures on the ship are nude and are almost identical with each other. From whichever side they are regarded the complex arrangement of the limbs is clearly visible. The similarity of the component parts of Minne's work was their most serious defect in the eyes of the public. They failed to see that the resemblances of these noble figures emphasised the idea of mutual assistance which the artist sought to express. They found nothing better to do than to regard this monument, which was great, even when it was a tiny sketch, as a sort of Japanese mask, a thing full of surprises, the discovery of which gives a childish pleasure. The verdict was conclusive. The artist should not have betrayed that he had repeated himself; he should have concealed his inability to create two men, he should at least have made a show of having produced two.

The force of all these wise observations was doubled when Minne produced the model of his fountain, the circular well head with the five figures all cast in one mould. It had the effect of an open scandal, a very prostitution of impotence! At the exhibition in Brussels I myself saw intelligent people inspecting one figure after another in quest of some trace of differentiation, of individuality. The comical part of it all was that discoverers were not lacking who were afterwards prepared to swear that there were in fact five different originals! What need have we of further witness that Minne required no more than one! Even one was too many for his critics! The public could not accept even his single figures. His *Reliquary Bearer* angered them by the monotony of its gesture. One would ask what the thing in the figure's hands meant; another was not convinced by the narrow angle of the arm, or had qualms about the anatomy of the thighs, or was shocked to find that the body must inevitably fall forward.

The fountain remains Minne's happiest creation. The figure is perfectly adapted to form the chain which surrounds the well-head though, strange to say, it was not originally designed for that purpose.* The only criticism to be made is, as may be readily understood, that there is here the same defect as in Maillol. Minne is not always Gothic enough. All the details are not under the control of the style. The flow of the rhythm should overwhelm the details of certain parts such as ears, fingers, and toes, to give greater concentration to the masses. A successful rivalry with real Gothic is only possible on these lines; the new hand must fulfil the old law in a new way. Minne's latest works give promise of such an evolution. The most important of these is the Rodenbach monu-

* Count Kessler thinks that it was originally intended for the monument to Volder, and that two such figures were to have been placed opposite one another.

ment at Ghent, the outline of which is magnificent. The elongated form with its air of brooding sorrow rises from the ground in two wonderful lines, the one running down precipitously, the other sweeping upward in a soft, full curve; it has the majesty and the charm of one of our northern mountains. It was a poetic thought to lay the broken hand on the face, but it might have been dispensed with, for one is surprised by the intrusion of this fragment in a completed harmony. It is a remnant of a fragmentary art, and its combination with the calm completeness of the figure is, as it were, symbolic of the new art, drinking its life from the broken hand of the old.



GEORGE MINNE. DRAWING.



GEORGE MINNE: BUST OF A WOMAN (LIMESTONE)
FOLKWANG MUSEUM, HAGEN, WESTPHALIA



GEORGE MINNE. ILLUSTRATION FOR MAETERLINCK'S "SISTER BEATRICE."

OCCULT ROMANTICISM

THE SHADOW OF REMBRANDT

When the mob breaks into the palace to send the poor king into exile or to give him swift access to the joys of the world to come, there are always one or two faithful servants, who take note of their master's last wishes, preserve the things he had in daily use, and guard mementoes of him as relics. When Delacroix disappeared, the tragedy was not so great. Romanticism did not fall in the tumult of a revolution, but because the king had no heir, and the people had anointed no successor. It concealed itself to appear again at a more favourable moment, or at any rate, to live on hope. Klosowski saw it quite lately at Montmartre.*

Long before this, Corot and Diaz had fled with their ideal to the secret woods, and Monticelli had hidden his passion in a mosaic of colour. Smaller men, such as Faller, paid for their silent Romanticism by cruel neglect.†

Fantin was the most enthusiastic of them all. He threw a thick veil over his Muse.

Those who bear themselves in this fashion are always persons of great refinement. Were they of a coarser fibre, they would have hurried after the king boldly. They refrained, not for lack of courage, but because this would not have harmonised with their nature. All their lives they carry about a devout air of exile, they are not well matched with their fellow men ; they do not stand aloof—such an attitude would seem to them too self-assertive—but they are different to all others, and when we go in from the street to visit them, we seem to be entering another world, and spend delicious moments in their company.

One trait is common to all these masked Romanticists, whom I will group together here in an intimate sketch. I can only describe it in dilettante fashion by a borrowed conception, and call them all musical. I am not speaking merely in metaphor, however ; all these personalities share a common passion, love for the world of sound. They have all been and all are enthusiastic lovers of music ; in two of their number, Monticelli and Fantin-Latour, this love verged on fanaticism. The former could listen to gipsy music half the night, and would then spend the remaining half painting. The whole greatness of Fantin is hardly to be realised by the non-musical. Carrière suggests a splendid deep melancholy 'cello ; Odilon Redon affects one like an echo among high rocks, half shrill, half sweet.

If we desire to test the connection by art-history we shall find numerous

* Klosowski, "Die Maler von Montmartre." J. Bard, Berlin.

† Loris Clement Faller (1819–1901). He was one of the first who attempted to transpose Turner's rhythmic air-pictures into landscape ; he was akin to Corot, and foreshadowed Fantin, though he made no mark himself. M. Christian Cherfils, of Paris, owns the sole important collection of his works.



MONTICELLI: IDYL
HAVILAND COLLECTION, PARIS



MONTICELLI: THE DANCE (LA RONDE)
RAMBAUD COLLECTION, PARIS

evidences of this close relationship from the first to the last. I prefer to take the most remote characteristic of all as the first: their common descent from an immortal ancestor, not Delacroix, but an earlier and greater master, the greatest musician that ever played with the palette.

They are all masters of chiaroscuro, not according to the grotesque conception which sees in Rembrandt nothing but a painter of shadow, but rather in the beautiful sense Constable gave it, when he called it "the power of creating space," a phrase in which he both defined Rembrandt's infinity, and unconsciously condemned his own very finite Scottish descendants.

At the Rembrandt Exhibition at Amsterdam there was a sketch lent by Lord Spencer, whether a *Circumcision* or an *Adoration*, critics were not quite agreed. Before the seated Mother with the Infant kneels a mighty old man; figures and stuffs quiver in the background, the light shines only on splendid coloured things.

May Rembrandt forgive me, but when I first glanced at the old man's yellow robe, I thought of Monticelli! As I came nearer, Fantin flashed into my mind, and when I saw the Mother's divine face, Odilon Redon rose before my eyes.

There was a colossal music in this exhibition, the deep-toned voice of an invisible man, saying clear things not to be understood. Sometimes it was as if a giant organ were swelling through the rooms, and one had to cover one's eyes, lest they should burst. Each glance seemed to gather up vast truths that one would fain have carried, each alone, into the wilderness, to listen, look and think to the full. The thought was terrible that space fails us, that the world is too narrow to afford sufficient solitude for each; that instead of the years necessary to carry it all away, there were but as many minutes.

When I got home, I loved the occult masters of Paris even more than before. This ancestry does them honour. It requires incredible courage to have such forefathers, greater than the equity which accounts the father of all artistic conception as of the past, because—the pen is loth to write it down—he was only an Impressionist after his own fashion.

ADOLPHE MONTICELLI

This Rembrandt-shadow, which was to become deep and wide enough to embrace the two greatest contrasts of the century, Delacroix and Ingres, rose originally in the most natural manner in the forest of Fontainebleau. Rousseau built within it. In his own time he was accounted a formless colourist, not the unrivalled master of space, who exhorted his pupils to paint a tree so that one could walk all round it, and who looked upon colour only as a means, sometimes indeed as a makeshift. His pupil Diaz was the first, who, to the horror of his serious friends, swerved away in the direction of colour, and was always half in Barbizon and half in Correggio. We can understand Millet's antipathy. Diaz hardly went to the root of the matter, when he said to his friend : " Toi, tu peins des orties. Moi, j'aime mieux peindre les roses." He did not know how to set his roses in space as the others did their nettles ; Dutch mastery was not easy to his Spanish decadence. Muther calls him a juggler. In his delightful fantasies in the Thomy Thiéry collection he appears as a subtle, but a small Little Master.

The great figure of this art, worthy to rank with the men of 1830, was Monticelli. His depreciators, who saw in him a tattered disciple of Diaz, received a lesson at the Centennale. Roger Marx hung the two side by side on the same wall—it is true that Diaz was not represented by his best works—and even the blindest had to admit, that if the elder gave anything to the younger, the latter had made something different out of it, not only as regards subject, but manner, and that this manner is as far above that of Diaz as Rembrandt is above Van Goyen.

The art of the great painters is always a kind of architecture. The smaller men are content with a bit of wall. Diaz was one of the greatest among them. The others create rooms. They are genius, the others talent. The life-work of a genius is a cosmos ; it is immeasurable ; whether it seems great or small to us, it goes down into the depths.

Monticelli was such a genius. He has been called a hero of colour, and this says little enough. Mauclair speaks in his study of Monticelli's " Pantheistic joy in light " * and this is more explicit, it indicates a greater complexity of emotions. Such personalities are always compounds, like Delacroix, like Rubens ; it is sometimes possible to point out talents more original in certain details flourishing beside them, from which they took something. Thus Monticelli took something from the other Provençal, Gustave Ricard, as did Delacroix from Géricault and Cézanne from Pissarro.

It is in the result that they become indivisible, and if in spite of this they in their turn gain an influence upon those who succeed them through individual qualities, it is because each concomitant in them proceeds from their general mastery, and is therefore more convincing than the same quality in other artists, who perhaps exhibit it more brilliantly. At the same time it explains how

* " Revue de l'Art Ancient et Moderne," Paris, 1903.



FANTIN-LATOUR: WOMEN BATHING (BAIGNEUSES)
LITHOGRAPH

dangerous the influence of such special qualities may become if it falls upon people, who are incapable of creating the same cosmos or another as secure.

That which strikes us as individual at the first glance in this moulding of the mass is the material. Compounded of all sorts of different elements, the mixture which can no longer be divided is unique.

With Monticelli it seems like a lava of precious metals; a broth, with the peculiarity of mingling colours without mixing them, in an impasto so fat, that it cannot be laid on with the brush, but has to be applied with the palette-knife. This explains the superficial aspect, this asphalt of purple and gold, of a thousand tiny gems. That which is inexplicable is the immaterial element in this coarse material, the life of tenderest structure; a fantasy breathed upon the canvas, for which the brush seemed too forcible to the painters of the eighteenth century, which Fragonard painted as thinly as possible. Monticelli is more tender, more airy than any of them, more splendid than Watteau, softer than Greuze, and I am inclined to say, truer, firmer than any of them.

This Rembrandtesque "truth and poetry" in colour was undreamt of at Versailles, in spite of all the poetry of the life there; painters rendered the perfume of the Court, not that of woman. Monticelli has painted woman more fancifully and at the same time more intimately; richer in costume, gorgeous with the brocade of her gown, and the proud plumes of her hat with its sparkling stones, she is at the same time richer in emotion; he has woven erotics into a fairy-tale. As his excellent biographer and compatriot Gouirand tells us * he was much in bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and passion seems only to have driven him to portray the satisfaction of desires beyond all carnal lusts. It is only the glow of his colour that is erotic; what he paints with it is chaste as the breath of flowers.

To express his poetry in words, one would need to be at least a Montesquiou,† and indeed, the best painted poetry is of a kind that cannot be written. Monticelli was by no means literary; he was pure instinct, not unlike Rembrandt in his life.

He came to Paris as long as Paris had an Emperor; one of his biographers tells us that he was in love with the Empress. When the brilliant rulers fell he was between thirty and forty, he had the Louvre in his head, friends at his side and hope in his heart. The war drove him away. Then disaster began. He set out on foot for Marseilles, lived on the sale of little pictures by the way, and arrived at last quite destitute.

Monticelli is one of those artists for whom poverty seems to be a necessary antecedent to production. They live so much in dreams, that the relative well-being they might attain to by a certain amount of luck and good management is not sufficiently attractive to them to entice them out of their world. If they were very rich they would use their wealth like princes; as beggars, they are able to imagine themselves princes, if only they possess the two or three francs that represent the essential ingredients of their existence, their intoxication. Their art gives them so much, that the terrors of their economic situation escape them. During Monticelli's most brilliant period of production, from 1870 to 1880, he

* Monticelli, par André Gouirand ("Les Peintres Provencaux," Henry May, 1900).

† Montesquiou contributed a charming study on the artist to the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" of 1901. This, as well as Mauclair's study mentioned above, is illustrated. The best reproductions are Lauzet's twenty-two lithographs (Boussod Valadon), with text by Guigou, Monticelli's friend and comrade.

lived in the most miserable conditions, and was probably one of the happiest of mortals. In his old age he was selling his pictures for the same prices as Diaz in his youth: from one to two louis; with this he was richer than any Carolus Duran. His work amounts to many thousands of pictures.

He judged his time very accurately when he said, not without a certain pride: "Je peins pour dans trente ans." But before the amateur began to think of him, the artists of Scotland and of France had discovered him. The one who best understood him was the Dutchman, who, like Monticelli himself at last, paid for eternal light by mental eclipse: Vincent van Gogh.



FANTIN-LATOUR: RHEINGOLD
LITHOGRAPH

FANTIN-LATOUR

We are amazed at the likeness between so many dissimilar people. They are almost like brothers, each of whom should have journeyed to a distant country, to say the same things each according to his temperament, worlds apart from one another. Monticelli appears almost as the long-lost son, a gipsy, dancing himself out of his wits, and by the wildest freaks of fancy lighting upon the songs which the other has elaborated in quiet rhythms. Monticelli, the genius, in whom everything was confused, save his artistic principles; Fantin, the limpid spirit, one of the rare temperaments, in whom a perfectly conscious conception becomes art, and to whom it is nevertheless granted, to keep the happy smile of an enviable disposition.

Fantin first wrote prose, before he ventured on his verses. His first pictures show him as a simple, solid Dutchman. Roger Marx has a little interior by him, two women embroidering near a window, dated 1857. The youth of twenty was graver, simpler, colder than the old man. In the same collection hangs the remarkable sketch of the year 1895, the apotheosis of Berlioz, the most passionate hymn which ever fired him, a hymn in which Fantin's idol, Delacroix, was acclaimed even more than Berlioz.

In 1857 he became a pupil of Courbet, but he could not stand the swashbuckler for long, although he owed him much, like all his generation. His god, as he confessed to the comrade of his youth, Antonin Proust,* was not Courbet, but Ingres, whose pupil he had been at the Ecole des Beaux Arts; his father, a painter of little importance, had guided his first footsteps. Later on he went to the Ecole d'Art décoratif, where Lecocq de Boisbaudran gave him sound principles.

But Fantin learnt from many. Bonvin and Ribot gave him as much as Courbet. Most of his teachers could only speak to him through their works. No other student knew the Louvre as he did, notably the rooms where the Venetians and their descendants, Watteau and his school, are hanging. No other was so familiar with Delacroix. He was one of the most cultured artists of his day. Degas alone rivals him in this respect. The early Fantin has, indeed, affinities with the early Degas. The beautiful double portrait, *Mes Deux Sœurs*, in which one young girl is seated at an embroidery frame while the other reads—the first picture intended by the painter, of course in vain, for the Salon—belongs to a world from which Degas also took his first pictures. It is marked by the same reality, but Fantin is more human. From the first he created an atmosphere in his pictures that makes the painted walls of his rooms a living and sympathetic interior. Degas treated his with a supreme calm, Fantin came nearer to Corot's interiors, making his still more attractive, and yet preserved the personal atmosphere of his figures. He is the quietest, the most peaceful of the three. Before M. van Cutsen's picture

* "L'Art de Fantin-Latour, par Antonin Proust," "The Studio," January 1902.

at Brussels, the girl at an easel,* every spectator is charmed by the grace that breathes, not only from the gentle sitter, but from all the accessories. He always gave his models some quiet occupation ; often placing books in their hands, which they really read ; the motive of *La Lecture* of 1861 recurs frequently ; and the meditative calm which his girls and women reveal communicates itself to the spectator. We cannot understand how the public could have felt itself outraged by this revolutionary : he paints a very delicate, refined social life, innocent of any straining after effect, and is in truth that which many people try to see in Whistler. He has no chic, no elegance even, no sparkling wit, rather, a cool demureness, which we absorb unconsciously. Fantin had visited London before 1860, and like his comrade Whistler, he loved the gray mystery of the city. He made friends there more readily than at home. Many of his early pictures went to England, as for instance, the beautiful still-life pieces painted about 1865, now in the Tavernier collection in Paris. There is more force of colour and of form in the large *Breakfast*, with dahlias, a basket from which the grapes are rolling out on to the table, and a plate with apples and pears, than in any of his later pictures, The glass vases with single blossoms in the same collection rival the Manets of the same period.

He also painted one of his double portraits for an Englishman. It represents the engraver Edwards and his wife. It was exhibited at the Salon of 1875, and is now in the London National Gallery. Edwards is seated by a portfolio on a stand, looking at a print he has taken from it. His wife stands behind him with folded arms, and looks out calmly at the spectator. It is a picture in which naturalness and psychological tact unite to produce a pleasant, if somewhat laborious effect.

To appreciate Fantin's groups, we must get accustomed to them. At first they give us a sense of discomfort. The enthusiasm that inspired him in the earliest of these pictures, the *Hommage à Delacroix* (1864), in his *Atelier à Batignolles* (1870) now in the Luxembourg, in the piano-picture at Jullien's, and in other examples, where he shows his heroes surrounded by their retinue, is deliberately concealed under an almost icy coldness. We miss the gay unity which distinguishes the patrician Dutch groups, and which Fantin replaces in many of his family pictures by the natural relation of the figures one to the other. We can almost detect that annoyance of the different artists at their enforced juxtaposition, which, as Arsène Alexandre laughingly relates, they so freely expressed to Fantin. †

In spite of this, these pictures already make the effect of great historical documents, so convincingly are the characteristic figures painted, and their lack of agreeable composition becomes almost an advantage ; we divine something of the reality of this changeful relationship, which has no need of externals to confirm its very intimate sense. Besides, the tone of these pictures is all the more harmonious on this account. The two portraits of Fantin's friends, Edmond Maître and his wife, are masterpieces of this tonal art, which is indispensable to Fantin's portraiture. ‡

* Reproduced here from an original drawing by Fantin. M. van Cutsen owns some other fine examples of the master.

† Arsène Alexandre, "Fantin-Latour," in "Le Monde Moderne," December 1895.

‡ Both portraits are now in the possession of Maître's brother in Paris. Maître was a painter, and figures in the piano-picture on the chair in the foreground, and in the Batignolles picture between Zola and Bazille.



G. RICARD: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER

THE PROPERTY OF M. E. RICARD

In some of the portraits we seem to trace a distant reminiscence of Gustave Ricard, whose works in the Blanche collection harmonise so well with the Fantins in their neighbourhood.

Fantin had a double name; the first has a cool sound, the second is soft and insinuating and recalls a master of the great dix-huitième siècle. He seems to have a double nature; if we examine closely, we shall find in him too, in this dual being, painting on the one hand prosaic subjects, on the other the sweetest Romanticism, the unity of that artist, who produced the portrait of Bertin and the Odalisques at the same time. One of the earliest pictures of this kind, the *Féerie* which was refused at the Salon of 1863, appeared at the Centennial Exhibition.*

It shows distinctly in various passages, I might almost say, in the various figures, the great influences of the Louvre, Veronese, Rembrandt and Watteau. In the pictures that followed immediately after this, the wonderful harmony of composition, of colour, of detail which makes Fantin great, and seems enigmatic when we remember the multitudinous influences that met in him, is already won.

Fantin is an admirable example of the perfect normal being, his development is one of the most instructive of studies. Of him we may say what we could wish to say of every young artist, that the school in which he was formed gave him a receptive apparatus which made him capable of becoming the greater, the more he assimilated.

He owed this to his teacher, Lecocq de Boisbaudran, whose immeasurable importance shall at least be indicated by a few words here. Boisbaudran was by no means a distinguished artist; I do not think there is a single important picture by him. He was originally an architect, but above all, a clear thinker, who had a capacity for reasoning out the things which a sentimental yet barbaric and persistently noxious tradition leaves entirely to emotion. He recognised the physiological side of the origin of artistic creation, was a rationalist by disposition like Léon de Laborde, Viollet-le-Duc and Chevreul, did not allow himself to be deceived by the artistic nimbus, and recognised that the momentous decline of French handicrafts since the Revolution could only be arrested by a thorough elementary education of the artist. What was lacking were productive elements. The Ecole des Beaux Arts with its eternal principle of reproduction only succeeded in spreading an epidemic of obsolete and uncomprehended forms throughout France. Ingres was a genius so subtle, so difficult to understand, that he could not convey the differentiation with which he approached the old masters to pupils who had not as yet the organs necessary to follow him. Like many other distinguished teachers, he lacked a preparatory method calculated to awaken that power of resistance in the pupil, which alone ensures a right use of the master's gift.

This introductory training was provided by Lecocq de Boisbaudran, when he became Director of the little Ecole de l'Art décoratif, and the phalanx of remarkable artists who issued from it will make his memory imperishable.

This success places the folly of two successive régimes in the worst possible light; the one, under the third Napoleon, incited by the envious spirits of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, was guilty of depriving this benefactor of art of his office, wholly without reason; the other, the Republic, committed an unpardonable sin of omission in not reinstating him, to profit by his last years.

* In the Haviland Collection. It was at the Salon des Refusés in 1863.

Boisbaudran was a born teacher. He had his doctrine not in his head, but in his fingers, and could communicate it in the simplest fashion. The literary form of his instruction, which he set forth in 1847 in the once famous pamphlet, "Education de la Mémoire pittoresque applicable aux Lois du Dessin," * seems simple and even jejune now. We lose the vivifying example with which the teacher was ready in every concrete case, the application as the work proceeded, which is praised by the pupils who still survive. Boisbaudran started from the premise that the artist who is to create requires a system, which could not be evolved from the oppression exercised by the classicists of the Ecole des Beaux Arts towards their pupils.

He did not oppose a ruthless study of Nature, such as Courbet enjoined, to the insistence on form of the official school; indeed, he turned away, to some extent from Nature. But he believed that the pupil must learn this recession himself with the personal means given him by Nature, not by a method of style. To strengthen these means, he showed his pupils the essential elements of the model, the constructive parts of the anatomy, the division of colour, of light, &c. and made them then paint from memory the study they had repeatedly copied, until he was satisfied. In other words, he did not teach drawing, like the Ecole des Beaux Arts, but seeing. He forced the pupil to look attentively, by removing the model after a time, and this necessity produced an involuntary exercise of mnemotechnical methods, which in receptive temperaments became artistic methods.

It is easy to see how helpful the personal tact of a teacher might be in such a process, a teacher who knew the weaknesses of each pupil, and could recommend individual methods. The lessons were not always given in the studio. Boisbaudran would take his pupils out into the open air, to an intelligently chosen spot.

But even Boisbaudran could not have made a genius of Fantin, unless he had found the possibilities of genius within him. On the other hand, we cannot imagine Fantin without the rationalistic training which formed him. Neither Ingres, nor Delacroix, nor Prud'hon created him, but rather his admirable faculty for assimilating these factors, a faculty which was certainly not born with him.

This well-tilled field Ingres fertilised. Not that he was the only, or indeed the most easily recognised procreative force here.

Ingres' influence upon Fantin was as his influence upon Degas. To both he served as a gymnastic. But the result of the influence was radically different. Here the two comrades parted company. Degas' chilly vision was warmed by Ingres, who inspired him with a desire for arabesque, and when he found the Japanese in his further progress, Ingres struck the balance again. For Fantin again, as for Renoir, the Odalisque-painter was a beneficent moderating force. He restrained him from sinking altogether into the seductive depths of chiaroscuro—Carrière lacked this wholesome restraint—and from following the fascinating dix-huitième siècle over the border, and made him give form as purely as

* It was reprinted in 1862. Ten years later he published the "Coup d'Œil sur l'Enseignement des Beaux Arts." His doctrine is to be found most synthetically set forth in his "Lettre à un jeune Professeur, Sommaire d'une Méthode pour l'Enseignement du Dessin et de la Peinture." (Morel et Cie., 1877.) His last work was "Quelques Idées et Propositions Philosophiques." He died in Paris in 1897, aged 95.

Félix Regamey, one of his pupils, has lately published a short biography of him, "Horace Lecocq de Boisbaudran et ses Elèves" (Honoré Champion, Paris).



EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE: THE KISS

FROM "L'OEUVRE CARRIÈRE" BY GEFFROY (PIAZZA ET CIE, PARIS)

possible, even though it was not the form of the schools. Sometimes he approaches very closely to Prud'hon, as in M. Henri Rouart's gem, *La Lune*, with the exquisite female form in the moonlight. But that which Prud'hon was only able to achieve by his linear rhythm, is here completed by a magical atmosphere, Fantin's pictorial means.

We are always conscious of the school of Watteau in this worshipper of Ingres. In the *Rheingold* plate of 1876 * the draped figure among the three daughters of the Rhine is taken almost literally from a Fragonard; the naked leg under the folds is typical. But close beside it we recognise Prud'hon again, and Prud'hon served Fantin as a stepping-stone to Ingres.

Herein lies the difference between Fantin and Monticelli. The gifted vagabond had only his unconquerable colour-instinct and his love of France's most brilliant period. He decked his canvases so thickly with jewels that he never had room for a large quiet figure, but all the rest is so entrancing that we never think of looking for details. It is different with Carrière.

Monticelli loved gipsy music, Fantin was one of the first Frenchmen who appreciated Wagner. But we cannot draw any immediate conclusions from this. They are both painters. Monticelli was the colourist. Fantin does not possess his marvellous palette; his colours are dipped in shadow, his contrasts are light and dark. Hence he never shows to greater advantage than on stone.

We may find Fantin's oil-pictures old-fashioned, deliberately limited just where we are accustomed to breadth and fulness, conventional in method, with a conventionality whose beneficence we have not the organs to appreciate; this manner is essential in lithography. Here the porous quality of work upon the stone gives the typical Fantinesque form.

That which the modern Frenchmen have made of the German invention, an art which we would not forego for the world, is more an expedient than an independent genre, a method of reproduction, which brilliantly adapted as it is to the fugitive manner of a Lautrec, a Chéret or a Whistler, impresses by virtue of what these artists recall by its means of their colour and their drawing, and not by the intimate use of the special qualities proper to the technique. But Fantin on the other hand, by the contrast between the black dots of the printing colour and the white of the paper, gets the peculiar network of his effects of light, the exquisite transparency in deepest shadow, the ideal means wherewith to continue what Prud'hon began in his drawings. One of the loveliest and simplest examples is the often reproduced print for the Duo in Berlioz' "Trojans," † the moonlight-scene with Æneas kneeling before Dido. She sits, bathed in the moonshine, against a pillar, while the dark outline of the wooing hero disappears in the shadow, preserving the attitude from any suggestion of importunate sentimentality.

Fantin shows himself here much more freely than in his pictures, which indeed were often painted after his lithographs; his colour is richer in the latter, richer even than Delacroix in his. Delacroix' lithographs were hand drawings, in which the hand burns with fever. Note his Shakespeare illustrations, or the marvellous print of the horse and the panther here reproduced. Fantin succeeded in winning a kind of chastened abstraction from Delacroix, which completes the purely formal quality that was born in the *Dante's Boat*. He makes a calmer effect, because all that might seem exaggerated in the movement is drowned in shadow. This Fantinesque shadow plays somewhat the same part as the orchestra in Wagner's

* No. 8 in the Hédiard Catalogue.

† No. 116 in the Catalogue Hédiard.

operas, which does not accompany the voices, but envelops them, and the peculiar gliding magic of this musical web may be the real explanation of Fantin's preference. Of the 150 lithographs emunerated by Hédiard,* a large proportion were inspired by the Bayreuth master; the first, the Tannhäuser plate (Venusberg), appeared as early as 1862.

Fantin succeeded in modelling monumental nude figures with his delicate black granules. Seurat made incomparable use of them. We shall hardly be wrong if we look upon Fantin as one of the sources of Neo-Impressionism, or rather, of the method sought after by Seurat. This influence is that which divides Seurat from his followers. Signac's circle neglected it, but many others of the younger generation, Aman-Jean &c., have listened reverently to the same music. Of all Fantin's younger comrades, Renoir is most akin to him. They have the glory of having served both traditions, that of the *Dante's Boat* and that of the *Bain Turc*. It is perhaps this which gives them their great importance for Young France, which groups Renoir and Fantin together, honouring them as its best loved masters.

* Germain Hédiard in the spring numbers of "L'Artiste" for 1892, and also in book form. See also for the later lithographs (down to 1899), "Lithographies Nouvelles de Fantin-Latour," by the same author (E. Sagot, Paris, 1899). The two reproductions in this volume were courteously placed at our disposal by M. Sagot.

The original plates were published by various Parisian firms and in various periodicals, (in addition to "L'Artiste," the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," "L'Estampe Originale," by Roger Marx (E. Marty), "L'Epreuve" ("Peintres Lithographes," &c.). Some of the Wagner plates were for Jullien's work on Wagner (Paris, 1881), the later ones by Vollard.



EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE: PORTRAIT

Carrière is the pictorial extreme of this tendency. He replaced the classic ideal, that glimmered as through a finely meshed curtain with his predecessors, by Velazquez. The round was his objective also, a full form, secure from the hatchet strokes of the Degas school. He achieved it with a broad brush, which twines the dark colour like heavy plaits about his high lights, and develops a rare tonal art in the process.

In the early works, the portrait of Roger Marx, for instance, and the two children of the years 1883 and 1885, which I was permitted to photograph, he does not only draw flesh, but paints it with a pale radiance which suggests a transfigured Rembrandt. It was only in his latest things that he once more attained this youthful delicacy of tone. He too is one of the quiet spirits, who dream in shadow; indeed, he sometimes conceals what we would fain see more than is necessary.

Hence lithography provides a technique well suited to him also. Carrière was rarely finer than in his portraits of the Goncourts, Verlaine and others, which he painted on stone, or in the marvellous illustrations of feminine gesture which under his supple hand became true form-poems of mysticism.

Lithography also prescribes the natural format for this art, and it seems almost a pity that it did not keep to it entirely. Carrière's large pictures, which fall short in colour in proportion to their increase in size, offend against the wise tact shown by Fantin, who had a similar tendency to lose himself in darkness, but obviated it by his artistic compromise, This defect, which was perhaps intensified by the inspired criticisms of enraptured feuilletonists, has made a paradoxical phenomenon of Carrière, which might almost have arisen in Germany, the land of "Schwärmerei." It affords an unexpected refutation of the superstition as to the Parisian's want of feeling. One would pass it by with a light heart, did we not divine so much charm in the beauty that sportively blacks its face.

ODILON REDON

Redon's appearance on the horizon coincides more or less with that of Carrière, though he was ten years older than the latter; he was born in 1840. Beyond this, they had nothing in common, not even social position. The inspiration which abounds in the shadow of the painter of darkness, finds little or no echo in the other. Mysticism is congenial to it only in so far as it is made easy.

Redon, too, is attracted by the secrets of shadow, and he saw tangible things in it, which make many worthy persons tear their hair. The naturalness with which the Japanese treat their pleasant spirit-apparitions found a sympathetic temperament in Redon, compounded of all imaginable ghost-stories—ghost-fragments rather than stories, perhaps. If he always seemed something of an amateur to the great artists of his generation, he at least saw images, apparitions; the fantastic element was in the presentment, not in the idea. Fundamentally, all this mysticism seems quite unimportant, no more characteristic of Redon than the actuality of Daumier's caricatures, which escapes us already, is characteristic of Daumier. In France it was so little understood, that he could not even find a publisher for his first series of lithographs, *Edgar Poe*, *Le Rêve*, &c., and was obliged to print them at his own expense. On the other hand, the extraordinary syntheticism of his drawing roused the interest of artists from the very beginning. His name first appears as an exhibitor in Parisian galleries in 1881. When he exhibited a complete collection of his drawings in the Salle des Dépêches of the "Gaulois" newspaper the following spring, he was as famous at the end of the opening day as he could ever become. He has never got any nearer to the public since.

The cult which mysticism carried on in connection with Redon, his relations with Huysmans, who immortalised him in his "Certains," made him interesting abroad. E. Deman of Brussels published a number of his lithographs, some of them as frontispieces for Verhæren's and Gilkin's books, and also the first catalogue of the lithographs. *

Redon's influence on Fernand Khnopff and other Belgians is so obvious that the results are not particularly interesting. On the other hand, he acted as a most valuable stimulus to the Dutchmen, Toorop among others.

Finally, he penetrated to Germany, where he combined with Goya and Munch as a suggestive force among the younger artists.

The first critic who concerned himself with the "Gaulois" exhibition, the late E. Hennequin † pointed out the perfection of Redon's drawing, and saw in him

* Unfortunately the plates were all published in very limited editions. Jules Destrées "Catalogue Déscriptif," which was published by the same house in 1891 has long been out of print. He enumerates seventy-five plates. André Mellério is at present at work on an illustrated catalogue embracing all the artist's lithographs.

† In the "Revue Littéraire et Artistique" (May 4, 1882), which published several important contributions by Huysmans and others during the brief period of its existence. It was the forerunner of the "Revue Indépendante."



EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE: STUDY

WOODCUT BY PERRICHON, CORPORATION FRANÇ. DES GRAVEURS SUR BOIS

not only a visionary, but an artist who could give amazing vitality to his material. This is the great difference between him and Gustave Moreau, who, with all his soul-reading, never succeeded in producing the spiritual in art, the life of the matter. Moreau was a naturalist who never went near Nature. He painted still-life pieces of the worst sort, which were only popular because, instead of well-preserved fish and fruit, he used ghosts equally well-preserved. The grotesque fashion in which Huysmans overrated him at the expense of Puvis has availed him nothing. There is more splendour in a fragment by Redon than in Moreau's finest jewels. We need only follow the division of black and white in his fantastic plates to penetrate the artistic secret of his invention. There are passages in which he reminds us of Delacroix. Out of the wild tumult rise solid monuments, as in the magnificent plate of the winged horse, which seems to perpetuate the culminating moment of a Delacroixian inspiration. While Delacroix makes his effect by means of life, Redon impresses us by the silence of his forms. "Ghosts are silence, that is why they are so imposing," said Jan Veth in his study. *

The simplest pieces seem to me the best. None of Ingres' successors has a like power over line. Janmot, the mystic among Ingres' pupils, was moved to a lively sympathy with the novice by this quality. There is a tenderness in his female heads—they almost suggest Leonardo—that makes one understand why his art must remain fragmentary. The head of *Beatrice*, belonging to M. Fabre of Paris, one of the most perfect of the drawings, is like a divine marble reflected in a mirror. † Here he is purely Greek, with a line that is only animated in gradations, a line that has had a fruitful influence on Denis and Maillol. In others he seems to have barbaric forms in his mind. I have a man's face by him, forged out of a few strong lines, that resembles early Gothic wood-carving, a barbaric Christ, or something of that kind. Such drawings inspired Gauguin.

They are all executed in pencil and charcoal, and designed for lithography. He did not begin to paint till later; indeed, he did not begin to produce at all, till the age at which Chassériau died. His paintings are little landscapes, for the most part insignificant, colourless things. He was considerably past fifty when he at last discovered his own domain as a painter. About seven years ago he suddenly appeared in some remarkable decorative pictures, in which we hailed a new artist, who had only his name in common with the earlier Redon. They were pastels of a magic of colour which could be compared with nothing pictorial, still less with anything in Nature. Any sort of compositional intention was rigidly excluded; there are no lines, no planes, a shimmer of specks strewn over the canvas like flowers, of strangely material colours, compounded of gold, silver, gems, and the black of rare butterflies; in splendour comparable to certain early Japanese caskets inlaid with mother-of-pearl. When Durand-Ruel organised an exhibition of these things in 1900, they were generally acclaimed. The public was won over. Redon painted a number of these flower-pictures for a château at Dombey, in Burgundy. Madame Chausson among others in Paris commissioned him to decorate a room for her. In certain portraits, as for instance, those in M. Fabre's possession, Redon combined his purity of line with the charm of this

* "Odilon Redon's Lithographische Serien," in "Kunst und Künstler," December 1903, (B. Cassirer, Berlin), with excellent illustrations, one of the best of which has been courteously placed at my disposal.

† Reproduced here in a wood-cut.

richly tinted still-life. While admitting to the full the beauty of these works, we cannot shut our eyes to the (in some respects) mournful fact, that the real Redon, an indispensable element in the development of contemporary art, ceased to be when this exquisite trifling began, and we can only regret that it was necessary to relieve the sexagenarian from anxiety as to his daily bread.



ODILON REDON: BEATRICE
DRAWING
FABRE COLLECTION, PARIS
FROM A WOODCUT BY RUFFE

BOOK IV

MODERN ART IN GERMANY



ODILON REDON: LITHOGRAPH
FROM "KUNST UND KÜNSTLER" (CASSIRER, BERLIN)

MENZEL AND HIS CIRCLE

MENZEL

The group of German artists we have already considered owed their inspiration to Italy, and were but slightly affected by the life of modern Germany. German history of the nineteenth century is the transformation of Germany into Prussia. Logically, we can only look for the artistic representatives of this new Germany at the centre of Prussianism, *i.e.*, in Berlin.

Chodowiecki was the first of these. He belonged altogether to the French dix-huitième siècle beloved of Frederick the Great, and was the painter, the engraver and the draughtsman of the French colony in Berlin. The typically Prussian element only appears in certain demure representations of the bourgeoisie on a small scale. Franz Krüger, also born in the eighteenth century, was the first representative Prussian Court painter, a self-taught artist, wholly uncultured but remarkable for a sincerity and a truth to Nature which make his works documents of the greatest value for the times of Frederick William III. and Frederick William IV. His work consists of innumerable excellent drawings, among which I include his pictures in oil. His *Parades*, belonging respectively to the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, are huge groups of portraits, unadorned, precise, reticent as people were then in Prussia, thoroughly bourgeois—we can almost smell the long tobacco-pipe as we look!—but with the rough charm inherent in the rendering of one who reproduces plainly and faithfully what he has seen. Krüger was a friend of Horace Vernet, who sometimes had commissions in Berlin, and he occasionally visited Paris. The curious harmony of certain little interiors by him in the Berlin National Gallery may be due to Parisian influences. In these, drawing is not altogether predominant; a timid but not unattractive painting asserts itself. The charm does not lie solely in the Biedermeier style, which was excellently reproduced by the Hamburg artist, Julius Oldach, and afterwards by G. F. Kersting and others, but is a personal addition made by the author. The horse was Krüger's speciality. Indeed, he created a tradition founded on a keen observation of nature in the rendering of horses, traces of which are still to be found in Marées' first studies. He had many pupils, among whom Steffeck, Marées' master, was the best, but only one successor, Menzel.

Menzel personifies the typical problem of German art so perfectly, that the story of his life might almost stand for a history, not of German art but of the German artist. I have already attempted this in a book,* so shall confine myself to a brief sketch here. Menzel, like all the gifted Germans, began very

* Der junge Menzel: Ein Problem der Kunst-Oekonomie Deutschlands. (Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1906.)

brilliantly, and, of course, as a draughtsman. His illustrations for Kugler's "History of Frederick the Great" (1839–1842) are as important to Germany as the works of Callot and Daumier to France. They appear more objective, but, nevertheless, they re-create the episodes they illustrate. Menzel's Frederick is his own, and the fact that the Germans have taken him as their own, only proves the extraordinary power of Menzel's creation. Every stroke of these delicate little drawings is an invention. It never occurs to him to choose his pictures with the help of the historian. He composed joyfully within the sphere of his own art, invented things susceptible of plastic treatment, using his text as a framework, after the manner of Hogarth, Guys and Beardsley. In the later drawings, preoccupation with objective truth hampers the freedom of the artist.

In his first oil-pictures, Menzel is a feeble dilettante, inferior to Caspar, David Friedrich and other self-taught predecessors. About 1845, he saw an exhibition of Constable's works in Berlin; he noticed with amazement, that it was just as possible to paint naturally as to draw naturally. He produced a series of remarkable little pictures, which stand out from the German art of the period like rays of light. They are pendants to the landscapes of Wasmann, Jacob Gensler, and others, but they are rather larger than the minute works of these Hamburgers, and are by no means restricted to landscape. Menzel's best pictures of this early period are interiors, such as the incomparable room with the fluttering curtain, in which there is nothing but light and air. Within the last few years nearly all Menzel's gems have been brought together in the Berlin National Gallery. Their creator threw them off carelessly; he painted them for amusement, giving himself up to very different things in his more serious mood: historical pictures, for which he carried on researches, that would have given him a place of honour in a German university. He drew from Nature with all Krüger's conscientious exactness. But whereas Krüger's realism had been curbed by the natural taste of the Biedermeier period, Menzel, the child of a generation without style, gave himself up more and more to the object, and thought it impossible to go too far in the direction of minute imitation. This tendency was held in check by the genius of the artist throughout the forties and fifties; the year 1858 was, indeed, signalised by the production of his masterpiece, the *Théâtre Gymnase*, conceived during a fortnight's visit to Paris in 1855, a picture that suggests Goya, Daumier, and Corot, and yet bears the stamp of the perfect independence of a bold temperament. He declined steadily after painting this picture. He lived fifty years longer and worked unceasingly. If it were possible to obliterate this larger portion of his life, he would be a greater man.

Krüger and Menzel, those two painters of soldiers, those laureates of the most martial and momentous period of our history, are pacific artists. In Krüger we still find traces of the humanitarianism which distinguished the classical Germans, who sang the beauties of peace, and were the first to attack a naïve and illiberal patriotism. There is little of this nobility of sentiment in Menzel; the normal egotism of his generation finds expression in him, and also the ugly side of that materialism of which Krüger knew nothing. There is an aroma of peace and contented well-being about their work. Krüger's *Parades* are like middle-class idyls, and a student of Menzel's work might suppose him to have lived in the most pacific of epochs. They reveal two typical German



GOTTFRIED SCHADOW: THE TWO PRINCESSES
NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

qualities, strength and weakness. Weakness—for the enthusiasm evoked by a series of great victories did not suffice to give them an adequate artistic form ; strength, for they are free from any taint of false sentiment, and the success of the German arms could not disturb the equilibrium of these good citizens. As he grew older, Menzel, though he remained a middle-class Philistine, gradually diverged from the peaceful and equable ideal of Krüger, and transformed the qualities of the latter into faults. Menzel is not pacific after the manner of Krüger ; he lacks the charm of discretion and moderation that characterises Krüger's works in the National Gallery, nor has he the same delicacy of feeling. We recognise in him the class which is gradually becoming dominant in Germany, a bourgeoisie no longer satisfied with its honest and obscure activities, directed to homely perfection, and aspiring with a simple dignity to the virtues of the heart. It is becoming coarse and impure, non-civic, as we might say non-patrician, inflated by ideas of universal greatness which betray an absolutely mediocre mind. The townsman of the little community is changing into the citizen of the great city. No one has ever reproduced more faithfully than he unconsciously did, the growth of Berlin, the city which increases steadily in size, becoming more complex and more noisy, without ever achieving greatness, that city where we find everything and nothing, and where everything, in spite of the order and exactitude that reign, seems slightly ridiculous. Krüger's Berlin was infantine ; Menzel's is an ill-behaved child, who has forgotten his nursery training, and great boy though he is, seems altogether unformed.

In no other artist could we find so striking an analogy with the typical character of modern Germany. The plastic arts had already lost all relation to the spirit of the age. Germany deliberately turned still further away from them, fearing a closer contact as if they had been some contagious disease. We may, indeed, find an analogous phenomenon in the literature of the day. Menzel has something in common with Lotze, the author of the " Microcosm." They are akin in their cheap scepticism, as in their prosaic optimism. Menzel more especially, had no conception of anything in the nature of a conscious philosophy. No one could have been less in sympathy with Hebbel's idea, that art is philosophy realised. He never fell into such an error—unhappily. He had a kind of Philistine philosophy which finds a quotation for every circumstance, feels everything and reflects everything, is surprised at everything and nothing, goes through all the experiences of life without one real experience. He was no " divine Philistine " as Riehl called Otto Ludwig ; but Ludwig's device, " this little corner is the true Paradise of the heart," might have served for Menzel without much modification. There is something of Menzel in Ludwig, in Freytag, and in Fontane ; we read it between the lines of these writers, more particularly those of Fontane, the painter's sincere admirer. Both have the same taste for detail and for uniformity. Like Fontane, Menzel puts man before everything else, and in man he loves speech above all. This passion for the characteristic word sometimes led the master of dialogue astray, and it was a kindred passion for making his figures talk which diverted Menzel from the path of art. With him it worked greater havoc than with the writer. There was but one quality Menzel did not share with Fontane, and upon reflection we shall see that this was the one thing which makes us love the writer and forgive his little faults. It is the vast resonance of his words, that expansion of the sense, which, surpassing the skilful artifice of question and answer, goes to the reader's heart. It is his

humour or his melancholy, the human element he mingled with his narrative, which lifted him above material details into the domain of the absolute, a region unknown to Menzel, the eternal copyist of material detail.

Menzel has no humour, and this must not be made a reproach to him. But he had nothing to take its place ; he lacked that emanation, grave or gay, which, escaping from a personality, gives a plastic envelope to the forms of his art. Menzel had something intermediary, which we might call a sense of the comical. And though I am not now thinking of the comedy in certain of his scenes, I am thinking of his attitude towards this comedy, and of the difference that makes itself felt between his attitude and our own when we are face to face with the same situation. He reproduced things that were unworthy of him ; not that ridiculous or trivial subjects are necessarily forbidden to the artist—a thousand examples contradict such an assertion—but he was unable to detach himself from his theme and stand aloof from it ; he became entangled in it, assimilated something of its character, and became himself ridiculous. Aristotle called comedy an " inoffensive " genre, and this vague definition finds its application here, when we recognise in Menzel's lack of a certain quality the cause of his artistic ineffectiveness. Menzel's art—I am speaking of his work as a whole, not of certain exceptions of his youth—is inoffensive ; I mean that it does not pierce through our being to our souls. It provokes only a superficial emotion because the artist has not himself penetrated the phenomenon, because his own activity is purely receptive, capable at most of colouring an event, and not of creating it. This activity Menzel exercised with great zeal ; his vivacious energy showed the comic aspect of his case with ever-increasing distinctness. Such an anomaly is and should be unique in history. Menzel is almost a genius in the skill with which he silences his own genius. But if, departing from this extreme case, we stand at a certain distance, we shall easily find the relation between this apparently isolated phenomenon and certain fundamental characteristics of German art. Many German artists who enjoy great popularity are " inoffensive " in the same sense. Menzel is but the most notable type of this numerous family.



MENZEL: INTERIOR (1845)
NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN



A. MENZEL. DRAWING. FROM A WOOD-CUT BY FR. UNZELMANN.

ANSELM FEUERBACH

> Despised and neglected at home, I can find an answer to the riddle of my survival only in my own strong and unbending character. To put it better I may be said to have found salvation in heredity and in my art . . . We live in a century of art chatter; some of the chatterers have been so good as to represent me as a peculiarly German artist. This is a lie, against which I most solemnly protest. What I am I owe in the first place to the modern Frenchmen of '48, next to old and new Italy, and finally to myself.
>
> A. F.
>
> (Allgeyer's Monograph. Ed. Neumann.)

Feuerbach and Leibl represent two such different worlds that one hesitates to mention them in the same breath. The implied comparison may even be considered wanting in reverence. Leibl was an artist pre-eminent among all his contemporaries for power; above all things he knew what he wanted. Feuerbach on the other hand lacked many of the qualities for which the other was distinguished. Yet I know no one who is more worthy of this comparison, and I can think of scarcely a single German artist to whom more respect is due than the creator of Medea. It is not so much what he has produced that deserves the palm. You look in vain for a single masterpiece by Feuerbach which will instantly open a foreigner's eyes to his merit, one of these works, so numerous in the case of Leibl, which at once command enthusiasm and make an appeal quite independent of a merely historical interest. You have to take a bad photograph of one of Feuerbach's pictures, select a gesture here, a tone there, add, subtract and strike a balance, and the result is that you are apt to throw photographs and arguments to the winds and to maintain against all reason that he was the greatest of German artists. You are answered, very justly, that the best intentions in the world never made a picture sublime. But Feuerbach had more than the proverbial good intention. In one of his earliest works, *Hafiz in the Tavern*, he painted a recumbent nude in a manner worthy of Chassériau. In spite of the natural awkwardness of the beginner he placed his figures as only the subtlest instinct for composition could have placed them. In the Roman child-pictures again the action of the little figures is altogether delightful, while in the interval between these and *Iphigenia* he grew from a child into a man. In the spring pictures of 1868 he produced the only German portrait-groups which can be compared with those then and previously seen in France. Finally in his *Medea*, in *Plato's Symposium*, in the *Battle with the Amazons* and in the Vienna pictures he reached the summit of his powers.

In the course of the usual rush through a gallery of modern German Art one often finds oneself standing rooted before a Feuerbach. Amid all the sentimental ugliness and triviality, the bombast of false patriotism, and ill-construed tags from

the classics we have longed for a quiet spot for the repose of our eyes and spirit, or it may be only for the shadow of a strong man in which we may be at rest. Feuerbach opens before us a great and spacious garden, not, indeed, completely beautiful, for there is no sunlight there and no flowers are to be seen. Figures clad in robes with many complicated folds pace slowly up and down. They have the air of being apart from earthly things and hold mysterious silent converse with each other or remain at rest, quiet as the columns on the great terrace. Their eyes look away, far beyond our questioning glances, and they live in a world whose dramas are exhausted, whose battles are all won and lost, whose feasting and revelry are over.

Feuerbach was the first of the lonely spirits who fled into the wilderness to fulfil a high mission. That mission was to bring to completion a great creative work which should be excellent in force and form, and which should answer to the needs of the culture of a great people. He had the wisdom to recognise what was necessary and his actual achievement was not small. It was not greater because the race for whom he worked could give him nothing which he could carry with him into the wilderness, and because he lacked what alone could have availed to guide him—a language of form which was his mother tongue. In default of these advantages he was helped by the neglect of his contemporaries. Schack's desertion of him at the critical moment of his career is a melancholy example of complacent error. He, the only patron Feuerbach ever found, treated the artist as the slave of his caprices, and records in his book as a matter of course his resolve to have nothing more to do with him. When at last the world was good enough to provide Feuerbach with decent conditions of work, the offer came from the one place where he could never be at home—the Vienna of Makart's megalomania.

We cannot be wrong in attaching the greatest importance to the material misery by which Feuerbach was persecuted from the outset, and which made his very benefactors obstacles in his path. Marées' lot was inward loneliness, the consciousness that his growth was stunted from the first. Feuerbach was more fortunate in his instinct; his genius moved in an ever-ascending line. What hindered him was his cruel outward loneliness and the want of that material comfort necessary to artistic production. It may be guessed that hundreds of pictures died with him.

The two sketches in the Berlin National Gallery, the *Flight of Medea*, which is worthy to stand beside the study at Breslau, and the *Battle with the Amazons*, seem to be the fruit of a vague but quite invincible creative impulse. Let any one, if he can, show me a greater conception in the work of any contemporary painter, or an equal genius for grasping what is essential to the action of a picture. This is not contained in the individual gesture of this or that personage represented, but in a certain unity bringing into all the details of the painting a mighty rhythm which pervades the whole. In the Berlin *Medea* the group of sailors pushing the vessel into the sea could not be better; it is not a hair's-breadth short of perfection. The parallelism, which in later days served him so well in the central group of the *Giants*, is a brilliant invention. There is a large harmony of form, sharp and clear as a Greek relief, soft and full as a verse of Goethe's. There is nothing trivial, nothing that could be dispensed with to spoil the mighty unity of the whole, yet there is no deliberate renunciation, none of the usual makeshift primitivism to impair the richness of the effect. The style is compact of space and light and colour; no line obtrudes itself; there is no trace

of those mechanical contrasts which strive to gain an effect by dint of sheer contradiction. All the details of the picture are harmoniously combined; it has the organisation which distinguishes great art.

It is possible that even the lonely figure of Medea with the boy on the shore might not have been completely successful. The piquant charm of the perpendicular line is not a truly characteristic effect of Feuerbach's genius. Moreover, the lilac tone is slightly out of keeping with the quiet colour-scheme of the whole which, as in all great pictures, depends for its effect on the movement of the masses and not on actual pigment. The mere completion of this study with its merits concentrated and its substance unaltered would have given us a work worthy of all admiration.

The final conception in the Pinacothek, Munich, is a composition of genius; in all the German painting of the nineteenth century there is no worthier effort. When we compare it with the Berlin study and with the earlier sketch at Breslau, which awake the keenest anxieties about the treatment of these scattered groups on the shore, we may well be amazed at the success with which the architecture of the picture is worked out. The three pictures are here reproduced together upon one page. Seldom indeed does a piece of pure composition in which construction is everything, produce so strong an impression that of all possible solutions of the problem the most brilliant, the only true solution has been found. The group on land contains the dominant tones and these are carried on to the group of sailors, which was the leading motive in the earlier stages of the work. The relation between the two very dissimilar groups is perfect, yet this correspondence is maintained by purely artistic means, and the mere connection of the two ideas has singularly little to do with it. Starting with the full mass of *Medea* with the nurse and children in the foreground, the composition required that the next plane should be full of animation, a requirement fully satisfied by the group of sailors. Feuerbach altered the terminal lines of the picture in every successive handling. The first draft shows the whole of the ship and the motive is treated as a mere episode; the effect is diffused. In the second sketch a portion of the ship is cut off and this has a decisive effect on the picture, little as it is altered in other respects, except that the nurse is noticeably nearer the frame. In the finished painting the landscape also is brought more into harmony with the whole. The peaks of the mountains are no longer seen; the frame cuts through the range. This process of development is exceedingly instructive.

The Medea group is the most precious fruit of the efforts of Feuerbach's predecessors to make the pose express dignity and sublimity. It is the final solution of a problem first attempted in his fine *Family at the Well* painted in 1866, the year of the Breslau sketch. Germany has produced no finer study of drapery; these large and splendid folds veil plastic forms. Allgeyer was the first to praise the skilful gradation of the personages secured by introducing the cowering figure of the nurse. This in itself would be merely theatrical if the artist had not made it inevitable by its ingenious relevance to the two main divisions of the picture. The landscape makes a fine setting for the group, affording a quiet background for Medea and leaving a shining strip of sea between her and the nurse in order to preserve as far as possible the monumental contours of both figures.

The colour is worthy of the composition; *Medea* is one of the few pictures of the artist's perfect maturity in which the painting is not inferior to the drawing.



FEUERBACH: MEDEA, FIRST SKETCH (TEMPERA) 1866
BRESLAU MUSEUM



FEUERBACH: MEDEA (UNDER-PAINTING) 1867
NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN



FEUERBACH: MEDEA, 1870
NEW PINACOTHEK, MUNICH

The first version of *Plato's Symposium* in the Karlsruhe Gallery with its full violet harmony and its delicacy of tone is much superior to the cold glitter of the Berlin picture. But the colour of the completed *Medea* as compared with that of the studies, is the realisation of early promise. Many people will at first prefer the sketches; they will be charmed with their soft violet tones, which suggest a comparison with the great performances of Puvis—a genius who has become more familiar to us. But Feuerbach would not have been the master we delight to honour had he contented himself with such cautious manifestations of his powers.

As in almost all the work of his best period the groundwork of the colour-scheme is a wonderful brownish violet. This appears in varying shades in the rocky foreground, in the sky and in *Medea's* undergarment, where it emphasises the high light on the beautiful naked foot in its sandal. It is repeated in the underdress of the nurse and is strongest in the trousers of the first sailor. In the landscape, in the nurse's mantle, in the hose of the second sailor and elsewhere it changes to the warm brown which is characteristic of the master. The blood-red surface of Medea's overdress stands directly upon the ground-tone; her breast is clothed in white which brings out the warm flesh tints and the lustrous blue black hair. The same cold red skilfully distributed lights up the caps of the sailors. The greenish blue sea flecked with foam is bounded at the horizon by a narrow strip of brilliant blue.

This scheme of colour greatly helps Feuerbach in the realisation of his conceptions. In the decorative work at Vienna the division of the colours gives a relative repose to the extremely animated composition. In his portraits of himself this becomes a warm harmony; the brown is at its best in the Munich picture. It seems sometimes to be produced by an admixture of orange and has none of the character of the Munich brown sauce, but is organic like the swarthy flesh tints of dark races. In this picture its peculiar success is due to the dark reddish violet background and the harmonious gradation of the flesh tints which appear as a lighter shade of the colour of the coat. The brilliant white collar and the shimmering black of the tie make an extremely clever transition. For pure painting the Karlsruhe portrait is even more remarkable; I have unfortunately not seen the newly discovered one.

The flowering time of Feuerbach's genius did not last long. Fine as the groups of children and the *Pietà* are, the Schack period can only be regarded as a preparation for the climax which came about the end of the sixties. Idyllic painting was as certainly not Feuerbach's line as it was undoubtedly Böcklin's; it was, however, the style which his patron preferred. We may well bless the day when he cast it off as unworthy of him. He had earned the right to pass to something higher.

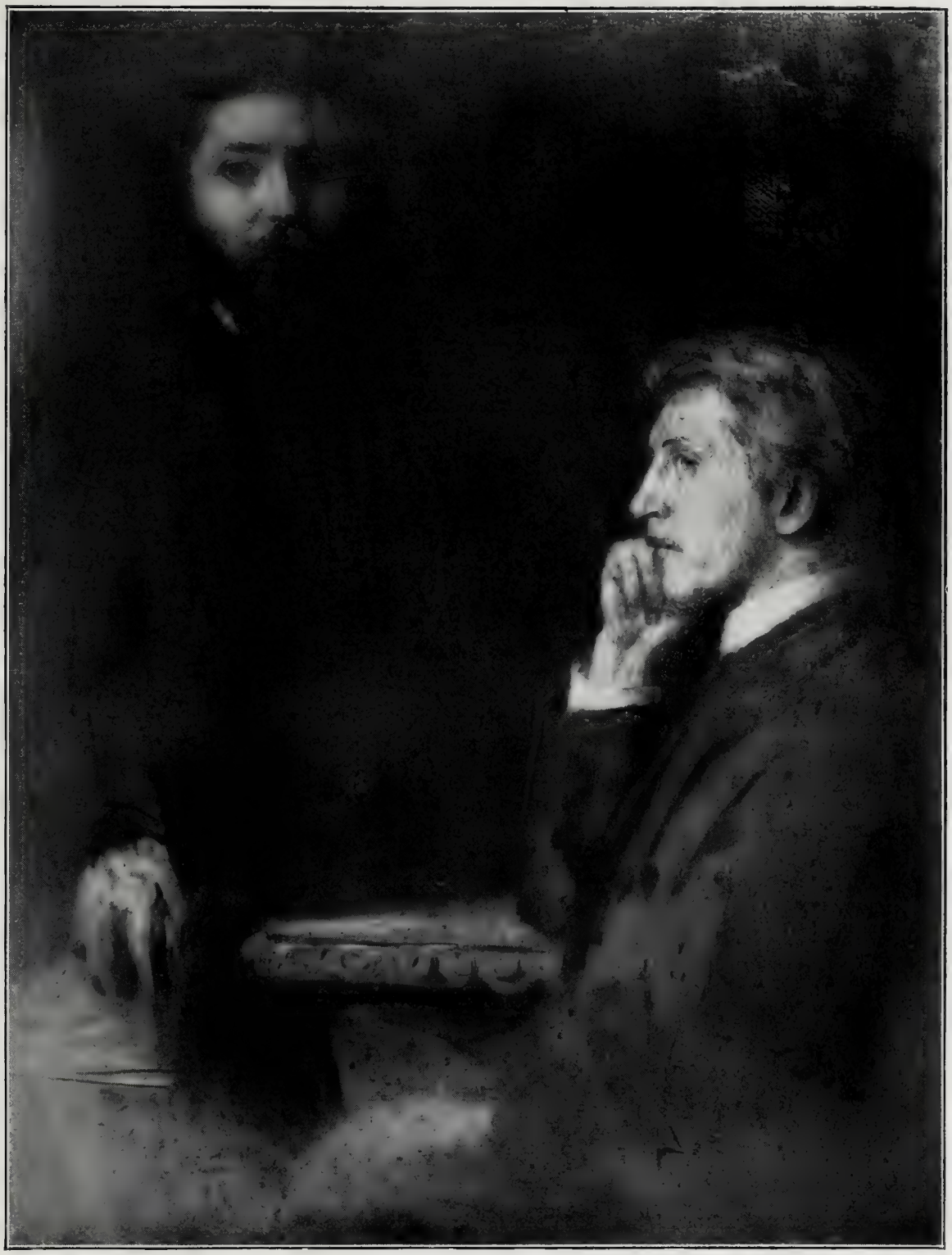
Circumstances were against him from the beginning. He had a clear idea of the importance of his position as the first German artist who had been to Paris. He entered Couture's studio in 1851, attracted, like all the pupils of that artist, by the *Romains de la Décadence* which had been exhibited in the Salon of 1847. Manet had entered the studio in 1850—Druet used to compare him to the wolf in the fold—and he remained until 1856. Puvis de Chavannes also was a fellow student for a time, but in 1854 Feuerbach left, early enough by common consent to escape any trace of the influence of either. Their works belong to a later date, but it would have been far better for the German artist if he had become the intimate associate of

the men whose spirit transcended Couture, whom he accepted as supplying the most convenient formula for the new thing that people were seeking in Paris. Couture's success in 1847, duly rewarded with a medal and with the Legion of Honour put Delacroix, whose pictures had been smaller, completely in the shade. Couture did all he could to justify his grotesque rivalry and Delacroix behaved admirably, as he always did. Feuerbach knew Delacroix' work, but he knew it as an enthusiastic disciple of Couture. It was natural enough that people who had been accustomed to Cornelius and Kaulbach should regard Couture as having reached the ultimate perfection of art. Meanwhile the painter of *Dante's Boat* had culminated as a colourist. While Feuerbach was in Paris the Louvre ceiling was painted and the master's oriental pictures were exhibited. To German eyes these must have seemed both exaggerated and eccentric, and the few critics who took any trouble over them spoke a language which could hardly have been intelligible to the son of an archæologist. And yet a German who was acquainted with all that was then going on in the intellectual life of Germany would have found a very great deal that was congenial in the circle of Delacroix.

Had Feuerbach had a few more years in Paris he would probably have found his true master. Manet left Couture's studio to make his admirable little copy of Delacroix' *Dante*. It could hardly have interfered with Feuerbach's development had be gained a profounder insight into the real nature of French art, of which Couture could only give a pale reflection. Such an experience can harm no one who has a sense of proportion. "To conceive nobly and to think correctly are natural gifts," he writes in his "Vermächtniss"; "they may be used well but they cannot be acquired by study; taste alone can preserve the artist from aberrations."

It remains a wonder how Couture's three great pupils got the better of their master's influence. In the Cheramy collection at Paris, besides Manet's copy of the *Dante* above referred to, there is a studio piece by Puvis painted while he was still with Couture, an intolerably sentimental fiddler who, if possible, is flabbier than Couture himself could have made him. There is also a later work, *Madeleine au Désert*, which, while not so completely emancipated in colour as the best work of Puvis, has already the commanding quality visible in *St. Genevieve watching over Paris* and is a world apart from Couture. Couture himself is represented in this collection by a full-length portrait of a lady, which recalls Feuerbach's female figures, and by a good half-length of a girl which might almost be a Feuerbach. The colours of the dress are the same that Feuerbach afterwards used, and the broad cold white of the shift low cut upon the breast is harmonised with the brownish tones of the German artist's palette. It shows that of all three it was the German who remained nearest to his teacher.

His wholesome distaste for Couture's laxity, a kind of profound and noble dignity, probably helped him more than the consciousness of a definitely new artistic purpose. The grim earnestness of the *Iphigenia* and of the *Pietà* was not calculated to attract Couture, but it would also have displeased Puvis. Such thoroughgoing seriousness was not compatible with the mild dignity of the *Ludus pro patria* in which there is no lack of Greek playfulness. Feuerbach is more pious than the Catholic Puvis, and he is a German with a strong inward consciousness of nationality. The boy playing the lute in the Schack collection, beside the girl with her hands clasped over her knees, is as German as a Steinle. It is remarkable how as time went on, and much more gradually than Manet, he came



HANS VON MARÉES: PORTRAIT OF HILDEBRAND AND GRANT
HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH

nearer and nearer to his master's antagonist. There were many hesitations by the way. Their temperaments were very different; they painted the same subject, but the Medea pictures by the German recall the Frenchman only in details such as the naked child—if indeed at all. The affinity is more apparent in the *Battle with the Amazons*. There, as in the studies for the *Massacre at Scio*, are the first stammerings, full of longing and allurement, of a new language of colour such as had never yet been known in Germany. The coldness of the classicists has melted in the flames unfurled by Rubens. As in the *Massacre*, there is an infinity of marvellous details. Delacroix is the stronger personality; in Feuerbach's greatness there are more distinct traces of the tradition of Genelli. In the Vienna pictures Michelangelo, the great exemplar, seems to fuse with a remnant of the German school of composition and with a reminiscence of Delacroix. Is it astonishing that in this culmination the defects of the school are most clearly to be seen? He should have begun at the point where he left off!

Feuerbach had a natural moderation which enabled him to escape the barbarism against which Goethe warned men. He avoided the feeble form of the æsthetes; he symbolised wholesome things, he expressed the symmetry of a high civilisation. This moderation implied no such compromise with his public as the claptrap of his Paris teacher; it was the natural compromise between the passion of the man and the intellect of the pure artist. The result was aristocratic art in contradistinction to Böcklin's, which has survived him.

Böcklin gave the Germans just what they wanted; it was some time before they opened their eyes to his highly coloured idyls, but once they had started, all thought and sentiment seemed to them to find expression in these. Allgeyer, who in his book* on Feuerbach gave some idea of the limits which divide one artist from the other, felt Feuerbach's superiority. There would be no point here in setting one up against the other. Marées forms a more natural connection between the two.

* "Anselm Feuerbach," by J. Allgeyer, Bamberg, 1894. New edition, with modifications by Karl Néumann. (W. Spemann, Berlin and Stuttgart, 1904.)



OTTO ECKMANN. VIGNETTE.

HANS VON MARÉES

In allen Tiefen
Musst du dich prüfen
In deinen Zielen
Dich klar zu fühlen.
DEHMEL.

ALL art which serves the higher interests of culture is a language of form fulfilling the need of the race to see its reflection in another world which shall materialise the noblest impulses of the present and perpetuate those of the past. Our age is the first in which there have been artists who, though ignorant of this language, are determined to speak at any cost. For them art is a purely arbitrary vehicle of self-expression. They are sufficiently important and sufficiently original to command attention; they have enriched the world with some new phenomena, but they have done nothing to increase its stock of culture. It is self-evident that every great artist has the power to add to the language of form, but such a language has its own laws, and was emancipated long since from the caprices of individuals. Even a great poet with the happiest turn for neologism can never do away with the ancient framework of his mother tongue; he can only strive after a deeper understanding of its laws; his new departures must be upon the old lines. Thus people who can paint or write or compose, whose performances are instinct with fire and temperament and whose personalities are full of originality, may produce beautiful things of all sorts and yet in no way increase the means of expression. It is rare indeed that the fame of the radiant stars whose advent awakes a storm of human questioning, throws off a ray which contributes to the general glory of the firmament. They experience the martyr's joy of being hated, or the thorny pleasures of having a following. Thenceforth they must be content with lesser things. Those who have had to bear that indifference which is the bitterest lot of the artist find in their far-off goal an assurance of a place among the constellations, where the truly great would rather be last than they would be first in the earthly kingdom of contemporary renown.

Feuerbach's generation contains several examples of men who missed the fame which was their due; Marées is one of the most notable. He was one of those who disdain to speak before they know the language, and he spent his life trying to learn it. Goethe sent us back to the ancients; he did not know Paris and, even if he had known it, even if some unimaginable enlightenment had shown him the importance of the future which lay before French art, his championship of the Greeks would have been all the more vehement. His sound instincts of culture revolted against the monstrous idea that a great people can make any progress without laying their account with the past, and he was one of the first to point out the duty of mastering the treasures of the classics. He himself probably sacrificed much to this duty and German culture has reason to be grateful.



HANS VON MARÉES: A WOODLAND INN
HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH



HANS VON MARÉES: A WOODLAND DRINKING TROUGH
HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH

By numbering himself with the Homeridæ he prepared the way for the victories of future generations.

The racial instinct has always been against this discipline ; but the race of the future cannot shut itself up in the narrow chamber of its nationalism where at any moment a gust of wind may burst in through a broken window and upset all its little comforts. A race with no power of absorption perishes from in-breeding. Why is there a danger at the present moment that our painting may be Gallicised ? It is not because our painters go to Paris. Free men are at liberty to educate themselves as they please. It is because they do not bring enough back, because they have not the sense to grasp the underlying quality of the French, which might just as well be called Spanish, Dutch, Japanese ; above all because they do not understand the classic element of the Frenchmen, the true basis of all Latin art. In Frederick the Great's time it was the correct thing to import art from Paris as it now is to import the fashions. Goethe was all the more a German for becoming a Grecian. He selected from foreign countries that minimum of culture which every nation with its eyes open must make its own in order to understand the rest. It was natural that the first German classicists should go astray with the classic forms just as the eighteenth century did with its French modes. But while the classical importations were less substantial in themselves, their effect was more profound from the first. They immediately awoke instincts which favoured a truer understanding of the classics, and the way was paved for a generation who busied themselves with the essentials of ancient art.

This generation looked the moderns in the face ; perhaps it would be truer to say that the moderns looked at them ; and then they went out into the desert like the saints of old. Marées was the greatest hermit of them all. He is the most striking manifestation in the struggle between the race and the individual, and his case is made more interesting but is also complicated by the fact that he was descended from a French Huguenot family * who found a new home in Germany. This descent may have enriched his sensuous perceptions, but it embittered his conflict with the German pedants.

Marées was a seeker after truth : he refused to do anything which he could not see before him in its remotest consequences. His hand was allowed no privileges at the expense of his understanding ; he refused to allow his inspiration to be guided by chance, and he refused equally to express anything in the appearance of his subject which was merely accidental. This implies the creation of form in accordance with a set of ideal rules—in a word it implies a tradition. But what tradition could there be for a German at Rome in the middle of last century who wanted to be a painter, and a monumental painter, and who was proud enough to cast off the " tradition " of Cornelius ! The more intelligent he was in his loneliness the more surely must his hand have recoiled from every attempt at production. Full comprehension must almost inevitably have led him to artistic self-destruction.

This was the man who at Rome cut himself off completely from the present and the past alike, went back to Nature alone, and discovered—the new painting.

The first Frenchman to whom I showed some bad reproductions of Marées' pictures said to me, " Tiens, Cézanne ! " I could not help thinking of that other who, when he saw the work of a greater than Marées' in the Sistine Chapel

* He was the great-nephew of the eighteenth-century Marées whose picture hangs in the lower room of the gallery at Schleissheim.

exclaimed, "Tiens, Daumier!" There is something uncanny about it; if one had not had the previous example of Feuerbach who prepares one for many surprises, one would be disposed to believe in witchcraft. A few great Frenchmen, weary of an art which resolved every clod into its minutest components, were driven to create an art which was synthetic. This art which was made possible only by the concurrence of a thousand favourable circumstances, found a mighty exponent in Cézanne; it is only in our own time that a dozen or more artists can be found who even understand it. Yet Marées, to say the least, foreshadowed it in all essentials; nay, he fully understood what Cézanne practised unconsciously, and had his colour had the necessary backing of a century or two of evolution he could have given it complete expression.

In saying this I do not of course refer to Cézanne the colourist who had all that was to be known at his finger tips, but to Cézanne the great artist in masses. For him the sun was the analyst that divided the human body into a few great parts and who loved to paint what he saw as he saw it. It was Marées who said that "the effect of flesh in the nude is conditioned by the form," and Cézanne, who never troubled about the skeleton, might equally well have said it if he had ever said anything.

In Cézanne's case the synthesis is almost a caprice. It is constantly disappearing altogether, for the painter of still life constantly returns to his worship of the material. (This was *his* way to greatness; let us be thankful that he took it!) With Marées it is an iron principle of determination. Regrettable as it is that we possess so few completed pictures by him, it may be said that even his most trifling sketch is important. It is not necessary to see the best of these things we now regard as practically finished, to appreciate him. Any of these hundreds of studies, even a miserable pencil drawing, is enough. They have always a completeness, a massiveness as of architecture. They have not, it is true, the rich play of line of the early Italians, of Daumier and Rodin. He has too much of a certain static quality which goes near to primitive simplicity and which we sometimes miss in the art of our neighbours, for that. But he might have scratched his nudes with his nails on the sole of his shoe and the figures would have been instinct with life. His creations were brilliantly projected; before they were ever embodied their arrangement was perfect. He had an instinct for great composition such as hardly any other of his contemporaries possessed.

What then was wanting? Was it merely commissions which would have enabled him to carry out his purpose to the end? Was it a better patron than Schack, the ideal connoisseur to whom he appealed in vain in eloquent letters? Was it a better State which would have found a place for him and his like? Or was there really some fatal deficiency in his nature, a deficiency so great that we must deplore in him an example of artistic vagabondage and aberration?

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The Schleissheim pictures which we owe to Fiedler's public spirit are all that is generally known of Marées' work. Among these the larger canvases usually monopolise attention to the exclusion of the remarkable double portrait of the artist and Lenbach, the portrait of an officer, the portraits of himself and of his father.

It is obvious that the painter of the larger pictures drew his inspiration from almost contradictory sources. The *Horsepond* of the Schack Gallery, the landscapes in the possession of Fiedler's widow, and above all Hildebrand's fine Marées



HANS VON MARÉES: HOMAGE (CARTOON)
SCHLEISSHEIM GALLERY

collection, contain the very marrow of his art. He was essentially a painter of animals and of landscape; he clung to nature like the Dutchmen of old. The *Horsepond* marks an epoch in German painting; the distribution of the lights which radiate from the horse in the centre to the edges of this picture, its realistic conception combined with perfect artistic completeness, had never been equalled in 1864 when it was painted. It would be interesting to put it beside the early works of Liebermann or to see how it would stand comparison with a good Decamps.

All these early pictures are pure oil painting, almost invariably mere sketches, but they possess an indescribable charm of sure observation combined with rapid execution. They awaken curiously contradictory reminiscences of great pictures, especially those of an earlier age, and are almost as Dutch in feeling as Manet's work is Spanish. They are Dutch, but they are broader, larger, and freer in feeling than Dutch works; they are more decorative, and have none of the Dutch detail. Had the Dutch produced a Watteau, he might perhaps have painted like Marées, for Marées went back to the fundamental principles of the Dutch gift for painting space, the "cubic quality," as Rodin calls it, in Dutch art. Marées constructs his pictures on Dutch principles but he tolerates no makeshift. He gets his masses so unerringly that it is unnecessary to equip them with details. The action is usually nothing—a few figures in the landscape in natural attitudes. In one picture * there are two groups of men and women at two separate tables in the open air. At the women's table the outermost figure is in the artist's favourite red, the others in a violet that is almost gray; the neighbouring group is hardly distinguishable but gives the necessary mass. At the table of the three men one with his coat off has a red cap and a glimmering white shirt; he stands upright and shines like a dæmonic flame in the blue of the night.

These pictures are all quite unfinished—mere coloured shadows in which the figures move. Yet they have more of a kind of superhuman reality, for all their mysterious atmosphere, than the work of Courbet. The reason of this is the extraordinary effect of space which is suggested in all their dimensions and especially in that of depth. The drawing is given by the colour as it was given by Manet, of whose portrait groups these sketches by Marées are strikingly reminiscent, as may be seen by comparing the reproductions in this book. The bluish gray background beloved of Velazquez, which Marées took from the equestrian portrait of Philip IV. in the Pitti (a picture he copied for Schack), is the basis of his colour. It forms a cool, soft twilight from which the figures emerge in a dull red glow. He is fond of a rich effect of shadow, as in the picture we are discussing where, in the background, is seen the head of a half-hidden horse, and where the heavy masses of the trees produce a feeling of profound mystery. The Scotch who hang by dozens in the Pinakothek—a questionable Hall of Fame as yet undecorated by a single example of this German—never had an inkling of the art of shadows as Marées understood it. Marées creates space therewith, dimensions, as Rembrandt could. Rembrandt was his inspiration in the portraits also. The remarkable head of Hildebrand, now at Florence, which was painted in 1867–68, recalls Rembrandt's early manner; and the fine head of the artist's father, its beautiful flesh tints relieved against deep black, is of the same family. The climax is reached in the portrait group, now in Hildebrand's possession, which is repro-

* This picture, as well as others of the collection which once belonged to Fiedler, is now in the Berlin National Gallery.

duced here. It was painted the year 1871 when Marées was in Berlin with Hildebrand. Hildebrand is seated in the foreground and behind, bolt upright, stands the dark grave figure of an Englishman named Grant, who was at that time much in the company of both Marées and Hildebrand. The placing of the figures is marvellous; it combines the quality of perfect naturalness with the deep mystery which distinguishes a Rembrandt group. It has that unerring kind of construction which cannot be reduced to a formula. Hildebrand's fine profile grows out of the dark brown tone of the whole with a blonde splendour which seems to be the product of anything rather than mere colour. It is soul, energy, the very look of a man's eyes, in paint. The blue eyes gaze out into the room with a keenness that transcends all petty realism and expresses only the spirit which looks through them. It is a true portrait of an artist by an artist, not so powerful as Rembrandt could have made it, but perhaps even more instinct with mind. In the same room at Munich hangs another portrait of Hildebrand, the well-known Thoma. Compared with Marées' picture its effect is dry and weak; it shows how incalculable is the inferiority of superficially perfect form without content to an unfinished performance which is living art.

While he was copying for Schack, Marées was for a time supervised by Lenbach; the portrait at Schleissheim in which they both appear is a lasting monument of this early friendship. To this no doubt is due the fact that Lenbach is sometimes represented as Marées' teacher. If this were true it would assure a certain measure of fame to Lenbach; but even if there was any such relation between them, which of course cannot seriously be asserted, the portrait of the two artists would be a very brilliant triumph for the younger man. Lenbach with all his curious learning in the old masters never dreamt of an art like this. He discovered an approved method of modernising the ancients at the least possible expense of time and money. He was great, as great as he had it in him to be, when he made faithful copies of their works.

Marées' second period, which commences about the middle of the seventies, has almost nothing in common with his first. The transition is marked by certain figure studies which come under the general designation of sacred pictures, but for which, as part of his work, there is no very appropriate name. I refer to the *St. Hubert*, *St. Martin Dividing his Cloak*, now at Schleissheim, the *St. George* in the Berlin National Gallery, and others. The *St. Martin*, which reminds one so strongly of Puvis' *Pauvre Pêcheur* in the Luxembourg, is one of the most remarkable of the series. The less complete variant in the Berlin National Gallery seems to me almost better, so convincing are the men and the colossal horse, with its faint reminiscence of Velazquez. At Munich Marées always makes me think of the Ægina marbles in the Glyptothek with their simply clasped hands and other elementary gestures. It was this instinctive grasp of movement which enabled him to resist successfully the most dangerous temptations in composition, and which made the play of shadow in his earlier pictures possible. In the horseman plucking oranges in the Berlin National Gallery he succeeds in producing an effect of the deepest mystery by this means. This picture is even more sketchy than the others. Only the pale horse with its bluish white tints is at all well defined. In front sits the nude figure of a woman quite motionless, and between her and the horseman there is the suggestion of a child. The monumental figure of the man reaches up to the branches; hardly more can be made out than the shining reddish mass of his body—the red

which appears in the flesh-tints of many of Velazquez' darker portraits, and which Marées used for the figures in almost all his early work.

All these pictures are painted in oil on canvas in the ordinary way; but even before this the artist had completed a larger monumental commission (the only one ever entrusted to him) the frescoes in the upper room of the Zoological Station at Naples. They were done in 1873 and they form the only one of his larger works which is completely successful. He was happily unable to spoil them by retouches. The library which contains them is a long, moderately lofty apartment, but it is unfortunately too narrow to enable one to stand at a proper distance from the pictures on the side walls. P. Schubring gave an account * of the pictures some years ago. It is rare to find a work of art which produces so strong an impression of having been inspired by its environment. The blue Neapolitan sky, the sun, the Bay—all have their share. The chief picture opposite the window, of the fisherman in the boat, is an "occasional" picture; but, like the occasional poems of Goethe it glorifies the insignificance of the occasion. Such figures as that of the old fisherman are common enough on the beach, yet in the realism with which he is presented there is a generalising touch. The grouping of the boat's crew of four with the parallel effect of the oars is thoroughly natural, and thus the moment represented acquires the sort of permanency which is seen in an ancient bas-relief. Marées was at that time full of the antique. The frieze is in grisaille and has unfortunately never been reproduced; it is one of the happiest and freest transcriptions in modern painting of the light-effects of the ancient relief. In the two panels over the windows, where he used the motive of the Roman mosaic frieze with the masks in the museum, his colour may be considered too garish, but just under one of these pieces there is a wonderful example of his earlier manner as a colourist. Two women are represented sitting on a bench in the deep green of a forest through which there is a glimpse of blue sky. The younger of the two with her flaxen hair, her strawberry red gown and yellow silk neck-cloth, might be a creation of Veronese. The gem of the cycle, however, in my opinion, is the group of male figures on the steps which is painted on one of the end walls. As in the case of the Hildebrand, one is astonished at the Rembrandtesque quality of the painting. By the mere magic of the lighting these commonplace, honest faces are transported into a diviner air, and even seem to owe their individualities to the light alone.

In the fresco by the window on the right the new Marées at last appears. Here for the first time he used his favourite motive, the Hesperides. A naked youth is plucking fruit from a tree, and the drawing of the figure is full of rhythm clearly pointing to a Greek origin, while in the old man digging there is still a hint of the previous period.

The whole of Marées seems to live in the Neapolitan frescoes; they are an instantaneous picture of a creative genius. The haste with which he had to do the work forbade the attempt to find a harmonious style for the whole. Thus he gave a section of his many-sided intelligence in which the two parts of the great elements of his nature (the Rembrandtesque and the antique) lie side by side but do not intermingle. It is the moment before the struggle in which he appears, not indeed so great as afterwards, but far happier and healthier. He had enormously raised the standard by which he wished to be judged; the work for which he lived only began after Naples, and it was at once his glory and his tragedy.

* "Die Kunst für Alle," vol. xvii. part viii. The article is illustrated but the reproductions are poor.

There can be no doubt that his French blood helped him with the foundations which he strove to lay. He came of a different race from Feuerbach. His will was stronger; he was beyond all question more independent, and in victorious power he stood quite alone in Germany. Nothing is easier and nothing is more stupid than to say of him that he did not reach the goal. Who even in our time has achieved what he tried to do? He was eight years younger than Feuerbach and thus was junior by a whole artistic generation of the greatest importance. This brings him close to Manet, but the requirements which dictated the art of the painter of the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* were absent in his case. Manet pressed on triumphantly while he was painting the pictures of the sixties; but once he had reached this level his task was to maintain his ground, just as Delacroix spent his life in consolidating the conquests of his youth. Marées had aims which could appeal only to an isolated German who received no encouragement to pause and work out what he had already attained. The consequence was that he undertook too much. He thought he could accomplish alone what two distinct generations in France were working out by a wise division of labour. When he became conscious of his power to paint space he pressed on to monumental work. The German Manet was trying to become a Puvis.

It has already been hinted that in order to accomplish his purpose Puvis needed the compromise dictated by his great wisdom which knew how to renounce and how to curb ambition in details. For him, as for Marées, and for every monumental painter, the detail was but the creation of the type. Puvis was happier in this than Marées, but it must in fairness be admitted that he went about it more soberly. For the decorator of the Panthéon the human body was a mere vehicle for gesture—Denis carried this tradition further—poor in itself, often without substance, merely a link in a chain. Marées wished to make his decoration three dimensional; that is to say he refused to give up any of the resources of his talent for the plastic presentation of space. Any one who has been to Schleissheim must remember the three nude female figures of the *Hesperides* as three mighty statues. There was something of the honesty of the Dutchmen in his conduct when he cut himself off from nature and from his friends alike and risked everything. This modern lacked the supple adroitness of our time; he was a creator in the boldest sense of the word. He had a theory, but he had a sense of duty which was even more creditable. The flat road lay before him which a thousand others might have chosen. He had the courage not to run counter to the deep-seated instinct which bade him pause until he had gathered in all the riches of nature.

What he lacked most painfully was the new technique which was necessary for the new painting. Puvis had only to read it off his friends' pictures. Marées knew that the medium in which he had expressed his earlier conceptions, the free capricious style, half reminiscence, half playful invention, was not sufficient for his new purpose. Unlike Puvis he did not take canvas but went back to the wooden panel. His attempt to improvise a technique suited to panel painting led to his ill-starred experiments with varnish.

Marées was always a creature of instinct. Common sense and candid friends might make clear to him ten times over that this or that could not be a success. He simply returned to the charge, heaped coat upon coat of varnish and destroyed what was good in order to get what was better. Hildebrand tells how he painted the beautiful blue sky of the landscape in his early manner which belongs to Frau



THE LOVERS



HANS VON MARÉES: THE WOOING
SCHLEISSHEIM GALLERY



NARCISSUS

Fiedler-Levi twenty times over, and finally left a result far inferior to his first attempt. With the new technique this repainting led infallibly to destruction. It did not occur to him that in many places you could not see the surface of the picture for the varnish, that the repeated layers of colour often positively rose into high relief, and that his fine drawing was smothered under these shapeless masses. It is hardly possible now to form any idea of what the pictures may have been. Eye-witnesses are enthusiastic about their strong harmonies at certain stages. What remains is enough to make posterity mourn; we stand in the presence of ruins.

Even these ruins however are full of power; it is indeed extraordinary to find that the grotesque deformation produced by these misplaced reliefs hardly prejudices their essential beauty. In his great picture, the triptych of the *Hesperides*, the central panel is tolerably preserved. The two side pieces with their oblique effects make a happy contrast with the three chief female figures whose parallelism is emphasised by the severe perpendicularity of the trees. In the study the old man with the children was placed on the right of the women and the two men plucking oranges on the left. This arrangement had its charm; the strongest of the three women, she who rests her hand on the tree trunk, was then opposed in striking contrast to the two nude male figures, upright and stooping respectively, while the more animated action of the other two women found its best conclusion in the horizontal motive of the arms in the other and more complicated group. The arrangement adopted in the picture at Schleissheim is however preserved in our reproduction because it answers to the author's intention and because on the whole it is the happier. Here the varying heights of the children lead the eye very happily down from the steep line of the isolated woman in the central panel. The legs of the boy in the foreground, who is pressing the large orange to his breast and clasping his head with the other hand, almost repeat the attitude of the woman's legs. The seated old man carries on the action of the woman's hips and left arm, and at the same time provides a fine contrast to the slanting lines of the three children. It is owing to this very elementary contrivance that the spectator fails to notice the gross blemishes of the work. The relief is at its height in the woman who stands apart, where it rises several centimetres above the surface of the panel. If it were more regular one might believe it to be intentional, for it is by no means a contradiction of the artist's constructive intentions. It sets nature at defiance no doubt, but only to enhance the nature of the picture, and it enriches the work by methods which distract us from the painting but which would be applauded as excellent if the pictures were built into some noble room. Even as it is the relief which at times swells into veritable bosses does not destroy the surface. The distribution of the parts is so just and sure that details which are quite non-pictorial pass unnoticed.

The concentrated energy with which Marées fought for his own nature against external nature suggests that there was a morbid element in his composition. He was assuredly near to madness when he approached the climax of his achievement; but we must not infer that there are manifestations of insanity in his work. His exhaustion was a perfectly natural consequence of the drain on his inward powers due to the constant expression of them. He poured forth his soul in brilliant works.

His last work, *The Wooing*, is probably his greatest. It is very badly hung at Schleissheim opposite the windows, and one has to run backwards and forwards

in order to evade the glitter of the varnish. Instead of the trees of the *Hesperides* we have here mighty brown red pillars which give a fine architectural richness to the background. From these three steps descend into the foreground and form a like organic division of the breadth of the picture. Between the pillars appears a slender female figure in a dark blue robe finely posed in profile; her arm outstretched towards the pillar suggests the parallel movement; the man in purple, with the garland in his hair, forms a pendant to her. The action of his arms, both extended in the same direction, is very rhythmical and runs parallel with the hand of the man holding the flower, who appears in one of the groups of the foreground. The sole diagonal is given by the small boy lying on the steps who continues the action of the naked man's left leg and grows up to the oblique line made by the leg of the man in the purple dress. The diagonal ends in the other boy who is looking at the boy on the steps and who is half hidden behind the pillar on the extreme right. The dress of the man with the flower is quite spoiled with black varnish. On him leans the fine nude figure of a man, with a double curve in his back and a foot badly disfigured by the abnormal relief. On this side of the picture, as in the case of the *Hesperides*, the highest lights are to be found. The man's body is a clear olive, flecked here and there with glowing orange. The same colour, less pure, recurs in the robe of the woman standing by the Bride. The group of these two women is the finest piece of creative work in the picture. The chief figure with her hands crossed on her ruby red gown is a very Athene. The other woman's arm is a further continuation of the arm of the man with the flower and completes the indispensable parallel to the arms of the man between the columns. The angle formed by the two women is peculiarly subtle. This almost mathematical invention becomes a strongly dramatic element here.

Costume visibly embarrassed Marées; the nudity of the *Hesperides* suited him better. There he had already achieved a harmony of colour in the mysterious light which comes not from the sun but is rather the pale glimmer of the moon or of a constellation that he alone could see; the olive flesh-tints, the dark brown foliage and the shining oranges; the bluish landscape with the more vivid stripe of blue behind. And yet one can understand that the artist was conscious of a kind of barbarism in the *Hesperides* and looked on *The Wooing* as a decisive advance; it was so. The problem he set before him was not solved even here, but its statement was becoming clearer as its complication increased. The invention of the architectural background of steps and pillars was a brilliant expedient. In the *Golden Age* and similar pictures the ideas of composition are still extremely primitive. Later his creative powers became precise. The *Hesperides* is in fine contrast to the much earlier picture showing three men, one sitting, one lying, one standing. The drawing is full of energy; it is a masculine pendant to the *Hesperides*. The latter is the poem of the woman, who invites to pleasure and passively awaits it; the former is the poem of the man, who sees, thinks, and creates. Both are symbolic pictures in the grandest style of a symbolism which works with simple means and without subtlety. The difference between them is the fundamental difference of sex. Marées' figures, when they are of the same sex, resemble one another very closely. Among the men the only differences are those of age; the women are always mature, fully developed and almost alike. In *The Wooing* he tried to bring both sexes together to take part in a complete drama of human life. The two side panels were to have presented the phases

which precede and follow the decisive incident of the main picture. On the right is Narcissus looking at his image in the water; on the left the betrothed couple. Both, while still on canvas and still unfinished, were destroyed.

Marées died in harness. At the moment when, not without reason, he had begun to hope that he saw his way through the forest of problems to a surer grasp of form he was seized with a sudden illness. It began in a carbuncle on the neck which operative treatment would no doubt have promptly cured. But he was without assistance; his pupil Volkmann, who was with him, did not himself know what to do and neglected to call in a doctor in time. Marées died at Rome on June 5, 1888, at about the same age as Feuerbach; he was not fifty.



HANS THOMA. DRAWING FROM "PAN."



HANS THOMA. DRAWING FROM "PAN."



BÖCKLIN: IDYL

ULLMANN COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

Das antike Magische und Zauberische
hat Stil, das Moderne nicht.—GOETHE.

WHEN Schack was choosing his artists he found at least one who was well qualified to satisfy his desire for idyls. His sympathy with Feuerbach and Marées now appears in a light rather different from that in which it was regarded ten years ago, and his reputation in this respect, though still acknowledged, has been reduced to its proper proportions. It is now clear that he did not understand the two greatest artists of his circle and let slip the opportunity of being their patron in the days when they were making themselves immortal. But he certainly captured one artist at least at the very height of his powers, and that artist was Böcklin.

Böcklin's mission was to produce a series of gay lyric creations to set beside Feuerbach's classic earnestness, and the heroic art of Marées. His gift was just as precious as those of the others, for it provided an indispensable relief from the continual high seriousness of the works of our greatest artists. He was indeed far from being called to the high task which has so often been the tragedy of a great man's life, the task of widening the boundaries of artistic creation, which for its fulfilment demands not only a new artist but a new art. His business was neither more nor less than to renovate and to people the German landscape which arose about the middle of last century. His domain was the idyl Feuerbach had abandoned. Böcklin's *Shepherdess* and the picture by Feuerbach above referred to with the child musicians, are, superficially speaking, in much the same vein, and how happy that vein can be is shown by Böcklin's work. In him lay the possibility of a German Corot, the Corot of the landscapes, of course, not so subtly sensitive in tone, not so rich in colour as his French counterpart, quite without the Frenchman's indescribable art in rendering atmosphere, but no less amiable. The delightful little picture of a pair of lovers in a wood, owned by Herr Ullmann of Frankfurt, and here reproduced for the first time, is full of a charming poetry which is rare in Germany. The artist, strange to say, is reported to have repudiated this picture, which is assuredly as much his as the *Shepherdess;* it shows that the Böcklin of the sixties had an excellent artistic equipment.

His early pictures have the smooth aridity of his master Schirmer, but out of this style he gets all the charm of which it is capable while displaying an incomparably more vivacious invention. *The Frightened Shepherd*, *The Anchorite*, the landscapes in Max Klinger's collection, and kindred works may seem old-fashioned, but they are all the more engaging for that. The gem of this period seems to me to be *The Shepherd's Complaint* of 1865. There is more art in this than in all the others, and the colour is something of which Schirmer never dreamed. The warm brown tone of the shepherd is wonderfully soft. This effect is unexpected in such close proximity to the magic mystery of Amaryllis' grotto, but the dramatic

impulse was already too strong in the artist to permit him to work out the contrast by means of colour alone. The veiled beauty herself is most delicately painted and the pink rose garland completes a beautiful harmony, rich yet simple and full of charm. With this picture the evolution of Böcklin as a colourist begins. At first it follows the specific development of Couture's German pupils, Feuerbach, Victor Müller and the rest, which may be studied in the Schack Gallery better than anywhere else, and it forces us to hark back once more to Feuerbach for an indispensable comparison.

The Venetians rescued Feuerbach from Couture's sauce. We can follow, almost step by step, the impulse towards logical division which mastered even his very individual colour. In the earliest Feuerbach in the Gallery, *The Garden of Ariosto* (1863), the palette of Veronese appears in the drapery.* It is still a sober palette and the silky tones are pleasantly juxtaposed. Compare with this picture the *Paolo and Francesca* of the following year. Here there is already an attempt at a complete colour synthesis; the contrasts grow out of an organic ground tone which in this case benefits only Francesca, as her lover is entirely in shadow. The shimmering gray of the wide surfaces of her skirt changes in the bodice to a reddish violet already foreshadowed in the gray, and the colour of the face and of the bare arm is an exceedingly subtle degradation of the same. An identical effect is to be seen in the fine *Laura* of 1865, but here it is attuned to the full chord of colour which dominates the whole. The next year Feuerbach painted the wonderful *Mother and Children*, perhaps the most important modern outcome of Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*. In it there is a symphony of tone in which colour is transcended, a harmony which, by abandoning strong contrasts, secures a far richer variety of gradations. The colour ranges from the well-known Feuerbach brown red in the gown to the dark blue violet of the jacket and deepens into the black of the hair in which the brilliant Prussian blue ribbon gives the one striking contrast. The respective flesh tints of mother and child carry on the harmony. The child leaning against the gown is a higher tone of the colour of the skirt; the mother's face a higher tone of the jacket surrounding it. Hence, even the feeling of the colour is made to suggest the charming and profound idea of the relation of the child to its mother's breast.

The *Mother and Children* hangs above *The Shepherdess* in which Böcklin seems to aim at more or less the same effect. The skirt that covers these saucy limbs is of the Feuerbach violet, but with a stronger admixture of red, which works up to the fine reddish blonde of the girl's hair. The colour quality of the whole figure is most fascinating and harmonises well with the neutral tints of the background which is naïvely flecked with red poppies. Many of the pictures painted by Böcklin about 1870 maintain this very creditable standard. In the *Murderer Pursued by Furies* the three Erinnyes are clothed in Feuerbach's silky colours, the first in pink, the second in green, the third, with the greenish snakes about her head, in olive. These colours are repeated in the group of the murderer and his victim, the Venetian rose in the corpse, the olive darkening into brown in the murderer. The tone of the whole is very fine; it holds the figures well together and envelops the horror of the situation in a pleasant vaporous atmosphere which accords with the green of the landscape and the ragged blue of the sky.

The dragon among the rocks is similarly handled. The fantasy of the idea

* *The Death of Aretino* (1854), in the Gallery at Bâle, and the *Meeting of Dante and Beatrice* (1858), at Karlsruhe are the first stages of the Venetian phase of Feuerbach's colour



PRUD'HON: DRAWING
LOUVRE, PARIS



PRUD'HON: PSYCHE CARRIED OFF BY ZEPHYRUS
(L'ENLÈVEMENT DE PSYCHE PAR ZEPHIR) SALON 1808
LOUVRE, PARIS

is not discordant; the very harmony of the atmosphere makes it appear natural and probable and a legitimate effect of art.

In the later landscapes in the Schack collection unmeaning contrasts have already begun to spoil Böcklin's work. The red of the pillars in his ancient Roman wineshop suggest the intervention of an awkward auxiliary hand. In another place this red becomes harsh brick colour, sharply and arbitrarily defined as if a patch had been deliberately cut out. In the autumn landscape with the figure of Death on horseback there is not a trace of any feeling for colour.

Whereas then in Feuerbach we can trace, step by step, a logical development towards harmonious self-expression in colour, reminding us of the great Poussin, who also came from Venice and who also worked out a similar reddish brown tone which distinguishes the works of his maturity,* Böcklin never gets beyond a feeble effort to follow the ideals of this high art. His attainment consists merely in a capricious choice of colour which seems capable of expressing only the external semblance of things, and which, compared with Feuerbach's art, is as the bludgeon of a savage to a splendidly chased dagger.

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Böcklin has left some characteristic drawings; among them some charming things done in the sixties and seventies which are far indeed from foreshadowing the ponderous manner of his later pictures. They are the creation of a soft poetic hand which plays round the form it depicts and in whose very hesitations there is a charm. The Swiss artist reminded Muther of Prud'hon, and of all the comparisons to which his desire to honour Böcklin has tempted him this is by far the subtlest. Böcklin's talent did in fact bear a distant resemblance to Prud'hon's; he too had a touch of that baroque feeling which led the painter of *La Justice et la Vengeance* to perfect rhythm.

The twenty-six drawings by Prud'hon at Chantilly form the modern counterpart of the forty Fouquet miniatures in that splendid collection. They express a refined spirit as modern as if they had been the work of a young man of to-day. They are so permeated with the culture of an age deeply skilled in form that one finds it hard to believe that they were produced at the very moment of the most appalling convulsions in the history of France. We might explain them, as we explain the much earlier work of Fragonard, as the last survival of an arcadian age; but the eighteenth century had no notion of this classic calm expressed in graceful curves, of this Hellenism in a relatively baroque mould. The artist who drew the study for the *Vengeance*, the two Potiphar sketches, the *Bath of Daphnis and Chloe* had form at his fingers' ends like the Greeks. His was no monumental art such as Puvis discovered in Poussin. Prud'hon appropriated only the exquisite delicacy of Poussin's drawing, not its passion; and when he made his drawings into pictures he aimed not at the majestic proportions of the antique but at the downy softness of Correggio, and concentrated all his skill in an effort to preserve in the finished work the seductive charm of his sketches. In the Louvre we may compare *The Rape of Psyche*, one of the miracles of French gracefulness, with the study for the picture. Here are two works by the same hand on

* There is no doubt that Feuerbach sat at the feet of Poussin. True, he could not have seen the Chantilly pictures (*Numa Pompilius et la Nymphe Egérie*, *Le Massacre des Innocents*, &c.) which most clearly show the relation of his colour to that of the French master; but he must have admired the Poussin pictures in the Louvre and profited by the example of the wide grasp of this clear spirit, this mighty intellect which might almost have foregone its pure genius for art, and yet lost none of its essential greatness.

the same subject, and yet the differences are as fundamental as the resemblances. Prud'hon's love for softness never destroyed his sense of proportion. The study grows into the picture as a young girl grows to the mature charms of womanhood; so far as its limited proportions permit it is full of suggested charms and beauties half revealed. In the finished picture the effect is enriched with every detail which can further the harmony, but this detail is not newly introduced at this stage from outside but grows naturally out of the plastic idea of the work. This idea as it appears on paper in the first draft is as it were an organism. Soft as the body in the picture is, exquisite as is that delicate flesh (an incarnation of Leonardo's smile), perfect beyond all conception as is the whole presentation of female loveliness, all these charms are controlled by the laws of that organism. I do not know any instance in which the portent of a body floating in the air without the help of surrounding architecture has been made so credible, so plausibly real. The artist has carefully avoided anything abnormal in his presentation of space. He brings his group of figures as near as possible to the other masses of the picture and so prevents an optical appraisement of the space. He then develops his central conception. The body of the dainty creature is posed in the manner most ideally appropriate to the action. Prud'hon paints sleep not only in the face but in the whole soft, easy slumbrous pose, in which the limbs move automatically and suggest an impersonal, supernormal state of dream. Both landscape and atmosphere are dreamy and governed by the laws of dreams. Thus he places slender, nimble winged creatures under the soft burden of Psyche's body at every point where that body has the least need of support. He lets the feet hang but takes care that they do not dangle alone in the air and repeats their action three or four times in the legs of the other figures. The greater and lesser bodies of the spirits who uphold the billowy folds of the drapery become a soft cushion for Psyche's form and the miracle seems just as natural as the floating clouds or any other of the enchantments of Nature.

Let us not ascribe the effect to the pleasing quality of the work. In comparing Prud'hon with Böcklin that explanation might be proffered; but without the profound architecture of the picture this quality would be merely the cloying banality of which we have so many examples and would hide its head before the robuster qualities of the German's work. The reasons of Böcklin's failure are the reasons of Prud'hon's triumph. Böcklin had none of that deeply organised form which we admire in Prud'hon as in all great artists. Böcklin is baroque in the lowest sense of the term, in other words altogether formless.

If we compare the drawings of Böcklin's best period with his pictures we often feel as if graceful and idyllic forms were being thrust into ugly uniforms. This, fortunately, is not always so, for Böcklin tried so many things that every now and then he happened upon something which he thoroughly understood. Sometimes his invention was brilliant. His first sketch for the *Triton and Nereids* merited the benediction of the angel of true greatness, but the transition from the study to the picture was even here already fatal. There is an enlargement of the scale but no proportional enlargement of the treatment. And the more he persisted in burdening an art which was essentially idyllic with external and purely theatrical effects the more painful this discrepancy became. Prud'hon also had his dramatic power, but he knew his own limitations and was more cautious. Böcklin attempted things which could be accomplished only by a genius such as Rubens,



BÖCKLIN: A PIPING SILENUS
DRAWING IN "PAN"



BÖCKLIN: SKETCH FOR TRITON AND NEREID
DRAWING IN "PAN"

who had a lightning power of expressing fleeting visions. Böcklin never thought about visions. His ambition was to reproduce phenomena.

An estimate of Böcklin's imaginative work is rather a delicate matter, for one must be careful not to be confounded with the foolish people who object on principle to the fantastic character of his subjects. An instructive book * was recently written, in which among other things these errors were collected and refuted. Nothing is further from my mind than to deny the realism of Böcklin's creations. To doubt the power of Böcklin's imagination, to deny that it can conceive the things of the fancy as sharply as if they were real, seems to me as unreasonable as to doubt the reality of a living creature that one sees before one. These things are conceivable. Natural science may deny their existence but they are alive for all that. It is precisely this to which I take exception.

Böcklin stands for naturalism in its most blatant form; for naturalism is not merely the bare imitation, however accomplished, of anything we see or know or can conceive. It is any kind of presentation which aims solely at recording the thing seen so faithfully that it has the air of reality. Moreover it is clear that it matters nothing whether the artist has seen the thing in question or not; we cannot pursue a painter to the East in order to check the accuracy of his oriental landscapes. If what he has painted has the semblance of reality without other qualities, that is enough to bring it under the category of naturalism.

Naturalistic art is tedious in proportion to the familiarity of its subjects. Interest begins when we make the acquaintance of new things such as an enlargement of a microscopic photograph of the infusoria or a section of the epidermis, a picture of a curious formation of rock or of a bone of the mammoth. When we see such things our æsthetic sense has some share in the experience just as it forms the measure of our feelings of pleasure or the reverse in the presence of a forest or a mountain.

One's feelings towards Böcklin's pictures are more or less of this kind. One finds a collection of likenesses of astonishing creatures which extend to a remarkable degree our knowledge of life on this planet, and at the same time heighten certain traditional ideas which man associates with the organic world around him. Most people in the presence of a caged python or a hippopotamus or an elk have a vague feeling compounded of curiosity and terror. This feeling invests the ideas of these rare beasts with a kind of mysterious poetry which in some cases recurs with the precision of an intellectual stimulus.

This is what Böcklin works with. His pictures arouse these feelings, and because the effect they produce is strong the beholder confounds it with an æsthetic sensation. When he has recovered from the shock of discovering Prometheus in the clouds it becomes a source of artistic pleasure to him. There is, besides the simple pleasure the ordinary man takes in any kind of anthropomorphism, the satisfaction he derives from his comprehension of the allegory and so on.

All this has almost as little to do with art as the python with Phidias. I say almost, for, as indicated at the outset, Böcklin was not a mere naturalist from the beginning. In most of his works the crude effects above described are mixed with attempts at the pure æsthetic appeal. This appears in his arrangement of masses, and in other points. But these compensations are not always present and —combined with a rich choice of means which, happily for painters of a less

* Hermann Popp: "Maler Æsthetik." (Heitz, Strassburg, 1902.)

exuberant imagination, are more inexhaustible than the fantasy of a hundred Böcklins—they are the only possible compensations.

Böcklin's art declines as he grows older like the art of every man who depends more on his physical than on his intellectual powers. There is a terrible disproportion between the task he set himself and his power to perform it. Even in the worst periods of the history of art no decadence has ever produced such barbarities as his *Cholera*, and other things in the same vein. Studies of these pictures are extant which are almost worse than the pictures themselves.

We may be thankful that the duty of publishing these things was not neglected. They help us as nothing else can to a clear appreciation of Böcklin's work. Paradoxical as it may sound, Böcklin in his later period contrives to obliterate the most crying defects of his work in the transition from the study to the large picture, just as in his early days he obliterated its merits. In the process of enlargement he, in common with all monumental painters, suppresses certain details. Accident provides him with others whose unforeseen emergence has a surprising effect. He chooses his format with great sureness and adroitness and clothes it fearfully and wonderfully with colour compounded of the best materials known to the old masters. By these means he endeavours to produce an effect of strength to enhance which he invents, with a remarkable play of fancy, the most suitable subjects he can evolve. But this cannot hide the vicious framework of the whole, which becomes preposterously complicated and obtrusive, proclaiming itself in a theatrical quality which is accentuated by the obvious good faith of the actor and the naïveté of his declamation.

Any admirer of Böcklin's will smile if you take his colour and contrast it with Marées' for example, not necessarily in order to set one above the other, but even with a view to showing that both fell equally short of the ideal. Yet many a modern German thinks nothing of hanging pure colourists near his pictures. I completely fail to understand this and it fills me with profound mistrust of the very praiseworthy efforts of the younger generation of German connoisseurs to get into closer touch with modern ideas of colour. The very people who are enthusiastic about the splendid Manet in the top storey of the Berlin National Gallery, whose sincerity it would be insulting to doubt, and who can feel and express genuine pleasure in Manet's essential qualities, go downstairs and bow down before Böcklin's *Pietà*. The *Pietà* of all things, the most abominable piece of colour Böcklin ever perpetrated! Is this merely an irrational impulse of piety awakened by a sacred picture, the product of a habit of mind which persists though faith is dead? Or is it really the case that these red rags, because they are red, have power to awaken some old lust?

But enough about colour! Painting would be come to a pretty pass if all it could do was to give us agreeable colour-schemes. Böcklin might defy this requirement even more boldly than he did yet be a great artist. If he would only give us pictures, real pictures, not copies of the outsides of things violently plastered, but never painted, on the canvas! If his symbols gave us some idea of himself, not merely of the shadows which he tries to symbolise! But the power which he aims at begets no new power; it has no principle of progress in it; all his elaborate apparatus never animates his canvases, there is nothing in them which the senses can carry away. The noisiness of his pictures challenges curiosity; they are fragments of pretentious phrases which at a distance sound like revelations and tempt us to come near. A great thing is being attempted, here is a man who

is to speak to his contemporaries in the tongue of the old masters ! Painful indeed is the disillusion when one realises the paltry result of these clamorous preparations, the triviality of these bombastic splendours. We expected a philosophy of life and find nothing but a turgid melodrama.

His technique is that of the old masters. Böcklin has studied Vitruvius and Theophilus ; his head is full of Leonardo's *Trattato*, Armenino's axioms, and Vasari's precepts. According to trustworthy accounts he has even incorporated Pettenkofer's methods with his own. He succeeded—and this was a notable achievement—in getting the diagonals used by the old masters in the preparation of their panels, and taught his contemporaries how to make their pictures indestructible. His pictures will exist when not a shred of Manet, Renoir and Cézanne survive. So much the worse for those who think only of the present. So much the better for posterity who will no longer have any need for Manet, Renoir and Cézanne and who will admire Böcklin's pictures as one of the most remarkable curiosities of an age rich in wonders. A time will come when people will be genuinely glad to have him because he invented things for which the next age will have no leisure and which, since they do exist, are worth preserving.

But the essence of Böcklin will not endure. There is no reason to wish that it should do so ; and, even if one did wish it, it could not, because, however obstinately these colours stick to the panel, they somehow do not impress themselves on the human spirit like the ephemeral productions of Manet, Cézanne and Renoir.

The theory of colour that the excellent Schick learned from his master might be good if it were not always used for scene-painting. Far better would it have been if, deserting his eternal receipts, he had pointed the way to a single creative act, even if it had been produced by the aid of minerals which would make old Armenino turn in his grave. Nothing of the sort however is to be discovered in his very copious notes. On the other hand we find one or two criticisms on a few old painters such as Veronese and some recent ones such as Feuerbach, which, as a clever Parisian said of a similar judgment by Couture on Delacroix, pass the limits of ordinary absurdity.

Nothing is uglier than to gird at the popularity of a respectable artist. It is with reluctance that I repeat here what I have often said less publicly. So liitle that is not commonplace ever goes to the heart of the people that one must rejoice at any favourable instance to the contrary, even when it is not in accordance with one's own taste. Böcklin was anything but commonplace and for that very reason he had much to endure. But here we have not to do with Böcklin but with all the rest, and to favour one would be to fail in one's duty to all. He lies like a log in the way of the future though he helped to shake off from our shoulders many an incubus of the past. For many he was a stepping-stone to the Elysian fields, but now he hangs upon our wings like a heavy colossus and threatens to drag us down lower than we have ever been. There was a way past him or over him to a sane art worthy of clear senses and strong brains. He pursues us closely not only to the upper storey of the Berlin National Gallery but downstairs, too, where the Germans hang of whom I am about to write and where others might well hang too if there were room.

Away with Böcklin ! Not because he is a German : there are more thorough Germans than he. Not because he has imagination—there are more imaginative people ! Not because he is a poet—there are greater poets !

Away with him because he has been false to all that was greatest in the past

achievement of the old German masters, and because his empty panels bar the way to the future for which Goethe hoped, and for which our noblest have fallen, because there is no principle of development in him.

Rather set your heart on Ludwig Richter : that can do no harm ; on Genelli : that may even help you. Love Cornelius if you like ; though that is unlikely. Admire Schwind and Rethel ! And if you need stronger food take Feuerbach and Marées or a score of others whom I will name hereafter.

Only when all the others who give us what is most necessary have the same vogue as Böcklin has to-day will it be possible to advise people not to forget that he was their colleague.*

* Since writing the above I have made an exhaustive study of the Böcklin problem in my book, "Der Fall Böcklin." (Hoffmann, Stuttgart.)



MAX KLINGER. FROM THE "RETTUNGEN OVIDISCHER OPFER."
AFTER THE DRAWING IN "PAN."



KARL SPITZWEG: THE CACTUS GROWER
NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN



MAX KLINGER. ETCHING FROM "AMOR AND PSYCHE."



E. R. WEISS. PEN DRAWING FROM "DER INSEL."



HILDEBRAND: FIGURE IN RELIEF



HILDEBRAND: DIONYSOS

ADOLF HILDEBRAND

> "As if one needed a new language in order to say something new!"—A. HILDEBRAND.

MARÉES' ideals were to a great extent those of a sculptor; but it would be a mistake to infer that he confused the boundaries of sculpture and painting as they were confused in the theories of Winckelmann and Lessing, which recognised no difference between the two arts. Nothing could be further from the truth. Marées was by instinct exclusively a painter; his hand had a natural aptitude for the brush. His profound instinct for pure painting, his talent for the material embodiment of ideas without previously formulating them as conceptions reveals his remarkable affinities with the French moderns. Germans seldom possess this gift, which is common among Frenchmen. But Marées had more than instinct, and in the stern conflict of his instincts with his consciousness of the demands of monumental painting he lacked the weapon of practical method. He tried to help himself out by using some of the resources of the plastic arts and in this he succumbed to some of the most ancient temptations of German artists.

To judge by the plastic element in their pictures the Germans must have a natural aptitude for plastic art. Every characteristically German picture from Dürer and Cranach down to Schwind and Rethel, is an imitation of relief. This points to the conclusion that our countrymen should be good sculptors; and as a matter of fact from the appearance of Schlüter, our Pierre Puget, a giant in the Baroque style, until the rise of the great painters of the nineteenth century our sculpture had the upper hand. At the very time when men's minds were occupied on the one hand with the seductive graces of Pigalle, the darling of the royal amateur of Sans Souci, and when on the other the spirit of Winckelmann dominated all our national endeavours, genuine German statues were being chiselled. In the capital of Prussia the great Schadow had diffused an amiable atmosphere for which Schinkel supplied the setting and for which all the pride we feel in the subsequent growth of Berlin hardly compensates. After the two winsome princesses in the National Gallery, one finds it hard to be equally enthusiastic about the rows of male ancestors in the Tiergarten. Rauch with all his dryness knew far better how to execute such commissions when he had his way. His work was better done and very much more pleasing.

We might quote a number of respectable names, and an enumeration of their characteristic merits would show that we had a surprising galaxy of excellent sculptors in a period which twenty years ago was regarded as peculiarly arid. The one defect of each and all of them was the lack of a personal feeling for their medium. They conventionalised cleverly according to one foreign pattern or another; in their way they grappled with the customary local difficulties of detail which they understood; they knew how to give personality to honorific statuary and how to improve upon the ideas of their patrons. But they gave us no models which could

has been lavished in the last fifteen years. Such an act of recognition would have secured for generations the prestige of royal power, which alone can exercise an influence of this kind on art.

Hildebrand is an architect in the widest sense of the term, and the sculptor in him is to some extent subordinate to the architect. In order to get near his individual figures, we must thrust aside all sorts of qualities we have learned to prize. We are not used to this clear-cut art which rejects at whatever cost the dreamy technique of melting shadows, and preserves its proportions from every possible point of view.

Hildebrand embodies a rational ideal of art. His work condenses the whole experience of spatial presentation in a severely logical spirit. His importance in modern art can hardly yet be properly measured, for we are out of sympathy with his creative aims. We are in the midst of a development which flies in the face of all logic and is great not because of the impulse which is behind it but in spite of it. Its efforts seem so important and symbolise our own irregular strivings so well that to repudiate it would be to repudiate ourselves. If we accept it, however, we are led into a thicket of compromise so dense that we can no longer see where we are going. In the midst of so much vagueness Hildebrand's precision seems narrow. He leads us by a way which is mapped out beforehand and of which he is sure ; he permits no fancies and is prepared to reject anything that a clear formula cannot express. Thus he appears to lack all the qualities which we reverence in our favourites. We are enthusiastic followers of those who see "reality in the magic of their dreams." We are delighted if we can faintly express fragments of our consciousness in a few broken words, or lines or surfaces. We accept outlines as perspective and we are as disgusted with the robust forms of Hildebrand as Huysmans was with people whom he saw eating. Even if we go so far as to discuss the formula and to accept it as a kind of wholesome discipline we hardly grasp Hildebrand's peculiar personal relation to it. It is easy to miss the charm of the type that he created ; it is easy not to see that his self-imposed limitations are scarcely any hindrance to the free play of his joyous fancy. But this fancy aims at more than the praise of amateurs. Posterity will treasure the later works of Rodin in its museums, and the world will bow down in reverence before them for all time to come. Our architects will learn from Hildebrand's Wittelsbach fountain how to build the palaces of the future.

Compare this fountain with Rodin's finest monuments, the Nancy memorial of Claude Lorrain, or the *Bourgeois de Calais*. Such comparisons are not idle ; on the contrary a rational artistic estimate can only be secured by carrying them out thoroughly. There was a time when Rodin and Hildebrand were not so very far apart. In his earlier figures, *L'homme au nez cassé*, or *St. John preaching*, only certain qualitative differences give the Frenchman his great superiority over the German—as represented by his *Adam*. Moreover, while Rodin has left unity of form further and further behind, and has squandered his tremendous gifts in hare-brained enterprises, Hildebrand's insight has been becoming clearer and more profound. His power grows with his accomplishment. One foresees a moment when even Rodin's resources will collapse under the weight of his superhuman exactions. Hildebrand fills upthe measure to the brim and gives us what he can. Never were genius and self-restraint so evenly matched. Hildebrand has not a scintilla of Rodin's gift for playing with material ; the German's iron energy can only wring from it a beauty which we do not always find interesting. His



KLINGER: THE DRAMA (FRAGMENT)

cool masses will never glow with the charm of the other, nor will he ever be praised for Rodin's unforeseen effects. Even when Rodin fails he has power to move us to tears ; if Hildebrand stumbles we simply will not look at him. That, however, has always been the respective fate of ourselves and our neighbours, and we have learned to put up with it. It only remains to draw what conclusions may be useful to those who come after us. The material is abundant enough.

Hildebrand has laid down his conclusions, as we might have expected. His classic chapter on stone work should be learned by heart in the schools. His occasional writings on architecture place him beside Viollet-le-Duc. The spirit of Goethe finds a fulfilment of what before was dim conjecture in the clearness of his exposition, and greets him with approval.

Rodin on the other hand, emotional as his words are, never conveys the slightest idea of the greatness of his art. So far as he conceives it at all he conceives it in vacuo. Thus his admirers are as much puzzled by his work as he is himself. This time it is the Frenchman who has the flow of sentiment, the German who maintains the cool supremacy of the intellect. They are two values : on the one hand the unadorned building, on the other ornament worthy of a fairy palace. If the two could be united, what a marvellous work the world would see !

KLINGER

El sueño de la razon produce monstruos.
GOYA.

KLINGER is indicative of the present position of the Marées tradition in Germany; he also has that metaphysical outlook on art which is characteristic of so many cultured people who do not belong to what is held to be the opposite faction. The tradition itself, which was nothing if not logical, or rather æsthetic, seems to be broken at this point, but the fact is that Klinger has never really been directly in touch with it. On the other hand, the metaphysical view of art for which he is responsible has itself in the few years of its existence become almost a tradition. It has produced too many great figures—Dehmel at their head—for us to treat it as unimportant; it is deeply rooted in all our methods of expression, and in it are involved so many of the essential peculiarities of our race that we cannot airily pass from it to the real order of the day.

Klinger has made a strenuous effort to justify our weakness in the face of Böcklin. Unlike Stuck he did not attempt to do this in a series of naïve pictorial works; he tried to intellectualise Böcklin. For this task he was equipped with a poetic gift so remarkable that I have never been able to understand how it never found its natural outlet in an important body of written verse. Up to a certain point he seems to have an equal talent for all the arts—for drawing, etching, painting, sculpture and music. He has also written. This has its importance, for Klinger has always known how to express himself intelligently, and how to choose the appropriate form in which to do so. At first the flow of his thoughts was so copious that drawing was his only means of keeping them within bounds. It was for him a substitute for writing and one could fill volumes in the attempt to analyse all that he put into it. His etchings are in the nature of fair copies of his drawings. When, in the course of his individual experiments greater complexities arose—symbols which he considered worthy of expression—he painted pictures. Finally the reduction of this symbolism to single figures has led him to sculpture.

"The beauty of a plastic work," said Taine in his "Philosophie de l'Art," "is necessarily plastic; an art always degrades itself when it lays aside its proper means of arousing interest and borrows those of another art." Happily Klinger does more than this. He is not in the least like the modern symbolist who splashes a few fragments of his conception on to the canvas and is content to inscribe the rest in a table of contents on the frame. None of our artists has ever been less sparing of his labour. His drawings and etchings are prodigies of calligraphy; they suggest a Dürer or a Holbein wandering in the paths of the Greeks. Sometimes the actual content of a drawing (as in the case of the *Rettungen Ovidischer Opfer*) is cast into the shade by the exquisite line of the border. There is a refined naturalism in these things, combined with a gift for the happy use of stylistic reminiscence,

which reminds one of Runge's allegory. This, too, is Baroque, but it is much more piquant than Böcklin's. I could cite early book illustrations by Klinger which would have delighted Aubrey Beardsley. In the draughtsmanship of Klinger and Geyger the last manifestations of the epoch of Carstens find an unhoped-for fruition. Klinger's errors in the choice of format have been as disastrous to him as they were to Böcklin. In the *Temptation*, the *Mother and Child*, *Time and Fame*, where as in so many of his etchings the peculiarly piquant technique produces an effect of almost excessive richness, means are used which are in their very nature typographical, and which only admit of a somewhat arbitrary handling of the material in the small scale of drawings. This microscopic method, of the nature of miniature though it is certainly not petty, he applied to pictures such as, for example, his *Venus in the Shell* in the Berlin National Gallery.

The dissonance becomes more acute when the same method is applied to sculptures on a large scale. The *Beethoven* derives indirectly from such etchings as the *Evocation*. Any appreciation of him, to be just, must be made from the standpoint of industrial art. Even his etchings are often mere combinations of details, but the more modest technique of the etcher enables him to keep the details together. In monumental art, episodes, even successful episodes, cannot form a complete whole, and no triumph in detail can atone for the miscarriage of the total effect.

It is easy to trace Klinger's mental development, which was guided by such heterogeneous influences as Gussow, Menzel, Rops and Böcklin. In Paris it was Goya who affected him most. Manet had discovered the Spaniard some few years before Klinger discovered the etched illustrations for himself. Goya the painter was lost upon him.

The artist of the *Caprichos* has wrought havoc among the younger generation of Germans. Von Loga's well-documented work on Goya has performed a real service by approaching the question in a cool scientific spirit, and by putting the etchings in their proper place among the works of the great painter. Goya's merit is not summed up in these audacious ghost stories, although indeed, if he had done nothing else, they would have been enough to make him the greatest artist of contemporary Spain. Who could learn this trick of genius? What artist could ever again combine those unique conditions which enabled Goya to find another form amid the uproar of his titanic fancies? His mastery of form, the irresistible movement in his masses, which nevertheless remain true to Nature, as if the storm which heaped them together had torn away from man and beast all that veiled the secret of their organisation, and had at the same time hurled them into a new atmosphere, where they speak a new tongue and where their vitality is multiplied tenfold—all this marvellous world is Goya's genius. He reveals himself not in the actual subject, but in the manner in which he evokes it from the canvas. His imagination is just as great in the wonderful portrait of his wife in the Prado as in the Inquisition scenes at Brussels or the drawings of bull-fights, where the lights, as in the best things of Rembrandt, both live and give life.

Slight as an artist's thinking powers may be, his work must necessarily suggest innumerable thoughts to others. The mere effort to come as near to the perfection which reveals itself to the seeing eye as the powers at its disposal permit is enough to raise the observant spirit into the clouds. One rejoices in Olympus, another pours out his soul in the joy of Nature, a third remains sunk in contemplation; it is a matter for each individual. The artist must be in his work, in the

very middle of it, and not an atom of him must remain outside. In many of his portraits Rembrandt thought more of the splendid glitter of a helmet than of the profound expression of the countenance beneath. Perhaps he might even have achieved this effect of expression though he had left out the face altogether! Such things have been. I once saw a Vermeer, a painting of a piece of carpet, which suggested the most extraordinary things to me. Cézanne painted still life pieces which have the effect of strange and monstrous beasts, and Menzel, who cannot be reproached with an unchastened fancy, has in the Berlin National Gallery an interior painted in 1845, in which there is no living thing, not a fly, far less a human being, and which is yet more alive than all his crowded pictures.

Klinger has two sides; one is the intellectual tendency which will interest the philosopher; in the other one divines an artistic programme, a tendency to work towards repose and once more to effect a junction with the tradition which he honours in Hildebrand. These two sides are not to be separated. They appear in the same work, always in conflict. Here there is a passage in which the artist, intent on form, alone speaks; there that form is complicated by a thought leading to amplifications which imperil the whole work. In his sculpture, as in his painting, we see this second side of his talent of which he is himself conscious, as appears from his chapter on Drawing and Painting; it is particularly apparent in his large pictures in which he tries to focus his ideas; but on what?

In *Christ on Olympus* there are at least five pictures, four figure-pieces and one landscape. The picture would certainly lose nothing if it were divided about the middle, so that Christ with the nude figures formed one part and the clothed woman with the two nude women the other. Clearly in this case he wished to give prominence to the mythical element and to yield himself up to purely artistic inspiration. Yet it is impossible to comprehend the basis of the picture, or the intention of the composition. Any one who looks at it without a fixed determination to read into it an intelligible confession of religious faith will see nothing but a purely arbitrary arrangement of nude figures. Quite apart from colour and brushwork, with which I do not propose to deal here, there are certain fundamental laws, certain requirements as natural as our need to be clothed, to eat or sleep; we want some principle of division to enable the beholder to enter into a living relation with the subject—not with the artist. How can he do this? Can he drink without a cup? Now Klinger's treatment of the nude is passable enough, but above all things, even before we can make good studies of the nude, if we undertake to cover such large surfaces as Klinger does we must mean something. I refer of course to a pictorial meaning, which in default of better may be as primitive as that expressed by Hodler, or Melchior Lechter, or Willumssen. It may be objected that in many of Marées' pictures the compositional idea appears to be very loose; for instance, in the panels of the *Golden Age*. I answer that there is no question of postulating an absolute, but merely a relative, composition, such as Liebermann, no less than Maurice Denis, keeps in view. When Marées abandons the vigorous architecture of the drawing in such things as *The Victor*, or *Homage*, here reproduced, the abandonment is more apparent than real. He merely modifies the rhythm. These impetuous masses of nude bodies, if expressed in a light and fluent rhythm, would be like a large bee in a spider's web, or a chorale by Bach played in waltz time. Böcklin does the converse.

In formative art the sense of space is everything. In the Ægina pediment at Munich it was enough to give schematic suggestions of the relation of the parts;

the Parthenon groups are knit together like figures that embrace ; the frieze of the Altar of Pergamum in comparison looks like a piece of Gobelins tapestry.

It is all a question of the stitches. This is the head and front of Klinger's offending. He does not embroider his pictures ; he plasters them on the canvas with no thought for the texture, so that his large figures, which are intended to express power, are empty phantoms. Often they have great beauty of gesture, action of far greater refinement than anything ever done by Böcklin. Sometimes, as in the case of the *Pietà*, this is almost enough to make a picture. But amid all this barrenness how one longs for a little sunshine, for vegetation, for atmosphere ! How warm by comparison seems the cold Feuerbach, how abounding in health the sickly Marées ! In nobility of soul the younger man is their equal ; a great gulf separates him from the Swiss barbarian ; but beyond, far away from these, and, indeed, from all others, he is pursuing a chimæra.

How can a generation which does homage to Goethe, the most harmonious spirit that ever shone upon the world, which possesses in its schools means of rational culture, which rejoices in a well-ordered civic life, and whose surroundings are in all respects tolerable, produce an art so devoid of all order ? How is it that the qualities of knowledge and scientific method which are our support, nay our salvation, in our dealings with other peoples, in the overcoming of our economic disadvantages in trade and commerce, make shipwreck in this, the most important province of all ?

* * * * * * *

Perhaps after all the production of the large pictures may be considered fortunate, not for us but as a warning to Klinger of what would become of him if he did not put on the brake with an iron hand. If it were happily the case that this strong man could forge for himself a rhythm, a form whereby he could comunicate to us what every man with a feeling for art would be glad to hear, then all these acres of spoiled canvas need not stand in the way of the enthusiasm which every completed act of creation demands.

The question is whether Klinger will find his way. There is at least some hope that he will. The fine relief of Leda, the standing figure of the girl bathing, the brilliant sketch of the combatants, in the Leipzig Museum, the head and hand, and the crouching woman (the finest thing he has yet done), are strong pledges that he will successfully solve his plastic problem. If so, a compromise with Hildebrand is inevitable. No doubt Klinger recognises the healthy tone of the Florentine master. It is quite comprehensible that he wishes to make advances on him, but he is wrong in seeking to make this progress by different paths. There is no question here of Hildebrand's personality, but of the formulation of laws which Hildebrand has neither invented nor exhausted. We can indeed imagine a development in which he would only have the importance of a pioneer ; but the subsequent progress must be on his lines.

Klinger tries to give more colour to Hildebrand, a very natural and wholesome endeavour. It is only his method that is questionable. No man can colour sculpture by simply making it out of polychrome materials as Klinger has tried to do. Those works of his which are poorest in colour are the costly things in the Leipzig Museum which can hardly be called plastic at all. Volkmann's attempts in this style are even more disastrous failures ; and I recall with positive horror a friend of Stuck, Rudolph Maison, who thought he had mastered the secrets of polychrome art when he displayed the coal-black head of a negro on a pole. Colour

in sculpture, as in painting, as in poetry, as in music, is movement ; everything else is mere daubing and will not stand. Klinger knows this very well ; he seeks for movement, but it is often a movement of detail—not enough or too much to impart motion to the whole. As in his pictures what is wanting is atmosphere, the fluid which should surround the figures and transubstantiate the stone. His work does not live, does not breathe ; it only gesticulates. His bust of Nietzsche is certainly the best portrait we have hitherto had of that great man, and is calculated to make us forget the Stöving reminiscences. But that is not saying much! A work which would worthily decorate the Weimar Archiv and be a real memorial of the philosopher must be full of passionate life. Klinger wished to make his work monumental in character ; he built up the face with this in view. But the immense variations in the planes of the face spoiled the effect. They are quite unmeaning, although they appear to correspond with the reality as presented in Hans Olde's faithful etching. In the picture these variations may be dwelt upon with effect. In sculpture this effect must be sought in quite a different way. In what way I know not, but Hildebrand knows and in this matter Rodin is an immortal exemplar.

In Klinger's studio stands his great marble *Drama*, the man rooted in the earth ; —again a tremendous effort, and again a great advance. We may regret that the artist cumbers his progress with works of such enormous proportions. A man who is growing changes ten times over in the course of such a work—Klinger has already been years at it—and the marble does not grow again.

The plan of the work is such that complete success is impossible. Not Michelangelo himself could conquer this monstrous block. But it is a piece of work in which a man might be victorious though defeated, and the grandiose fragment of the Genius whose form is growing round about the stone below is certainly the finest victory that Klinger has ever gained so far. Here unity seemed assured, the material should have been exactly used up by the whole. The body, which covers one of the sides and is parallel with the chief figure (the parallelism is not quite successful), and whose feet now spoil the front view, should have been hewn out, as Hildebrand says, stone in stone, not laid on as it now seems to be. Hollows appear in the central figure where there should have been solid masses. The head produces its happiest effect at present because, unlike the limbs which are already finished, it does not disturb the lighting of the whole with individual reflections. Is it an accident that Klinger has never been able to make up his mind to finish this head ?

But—and this is the great thing—here are effects of perspective, let the group turn out as it may. Klinger's energy borders on the fabulous. Difficulties which would break another man like rotten wood seem only to steel his strength. The complication of his self-imposed problem which may seem to those who look on from a distance to be a kind of labour of the Danaides, at least gives a pledge that if he solves it he will make a more profound use of his victory than others who have been more fortunate.

Until then Hildebrand's example will remain unsurpassed in Germany. If we are to get beyond it we must turn our eyes back to France, where young Maillol is playfully achieving what remains to be done after Hildebrand. He has never troubled his head about problems.

Hoffmann, the last of the German Romans, is the only artist who seems at times to recall the pictorial ideal of the Feuerbach group.



LEIBL: IN CHURCH

VON SCHOEN COLLECTION, WORMS

FROM AN ENGRAVING PUBLISHED BY F. GURLITT

LEIBL AND HIS CIRCLE

WILHELM LEIBL

> " But let every man look to it that he make not impossibilities, insufferable to Nature."
>
> DÜRER.

In Leibl there was a remarkable union of pure painting and pure draughtsmanship, two things which in most of the great Germans are incompatible ; the lesser are driven to the one extreme or the other, and Leibl is the most brilliant representative of our art in the nineteenth century because at moments he brought the two into complete harmony. At these moments he was not only the greatest artist in Germany but one of the greatest artists in the world.

He fought against the pictorial. No doubt it is the component of his work which is easiest to recognise, a reflection of the Piloty school, of Lenbach and other associates. But Leibl never forgot whence this reflection came and concentrated all that had gone to the making of it, Van Eyck, the Venetians, and the old Dutchmen. Perhaps the Dutch strain in him is the finest. In the *Cocotte* he is a Vermeer with more of chiaroscuro, in the *Dachauerinnen* a Vermeer with more plastic power, a Vermeer with a more monumental quality in the Worms picture of the three women in church.

His drawing goes back to our oldest artists. His studies of costume, that is, those fragments which he has cut out of his pictures in so extraordinary a fashion, recall the old masters of his native town. His pencil drawings of hands suggest Gothic saints, but not such as appeared to Rethel and his like. And his genre pictures ! His intention was to make his works really cheerful, but perhaps, too, there was a touch of Defregger in him and this led to the production of such monstrous things as the picture which was very recently in Herr von Defregger's house in Munich,* the girl on the bench beside the old man whose smile affects one like the faces on the roof of Notre Dame.

I said monstrous ; they are also incomprehensible. If one could discover anything susceptible of stylistic exposition in the same way as modern architecture, the effect would be easier to explain. But this is notoriously naturalism, " playing the eavesdropper to reality."

In the Worms picture one feels that one is getting nearer to the secret. A volume might be written on the innumerable effects of parallelism which it contains. The introduction of the rococo woodwork in combination with the varying swell of the skirts of the sitting figures, most daring in the case of the middle one, is a stroke of genius. Besides this (as Georg Gronau rightly recognises in his excellent

* The picture was sold in 1902 by Herr von Defregger to the Städelsche Museumsverein for 33,000 marks and now hangs in the Städel Institute at Frankfort.

biography *) one of the chief sources of the effect of the picture lies in the passage of the high white lights from the foreground to the background and in the smooth brightness of the flat wall against which the head of the third woman is relieved.

This is Leibl's naturalism. He takes a laughing girl, not because it rejoices his heart to see her laugh, but because her mouth as she laughs gives two or three broken curves which, with the graining of the table top and the stove pipe, compose an interesting study in ellipses. He makes his poacher look ferocious, not in order to tickle us with the idea of robbery under arms, but because it produces two cross-wrinkles and a whole system of neighbouring wrinkles in his face which, regarded as perpendiculars in ideal space, work together with a horizontal system of lines in the man's coat and a branch or two of the neighbouring tree and thus complete the architectonic scheme. He puts a pipe in some worthy old man's mouth, not in order to suggest to us the pretty song, "Gott grüss Euch, Alter," but because the white of the clay is indispensable to the colour of the coat.

Of course he picks and chooses his models. The old peasant with the crutch (No. 10 in Gronau's collection of engravings) did not possess these rugged wrinkles for nothing; Leibl saw that they exactly suited the technique of etching just as foliage suited Monticelli's mosaic of blurs, giving animation to the surface.

There are people who insist that Leibl is great because he is such an excellent observer of Nature. This is no doubt true, but it was a nature of his own that he observed.

Yet, if his ultimate object was merely to express certain geometrical ideas, why, it is asked, did he paint as a rule from Nature; why was the very existence of the Worms picture endangered because the good priest died who had permitted painting from models in the church? Why did Leibl not follow the practice of other great artists who it is said, often painted from hurried sketches, and often even entirely from memory? The reason is that no one can play chess without a chessboard. Leibl was just as independent of Nature as Manet, and Manet, as every one knows, also painted from Nature only. But Manet's technique was simpler. His system was easier to hold together in his head or in a sketch than Leibl's. Leibl had to deal with a programme so complicated that only the continual presence before his eyes of that Nature which in a sense contained his sketch enabled him to realise his picture. And it is no objection to say that in his work he depended on accidents, or that he left things as they were. The arrangement was a matter of the mind, and for this external circumstances were as indifferent as the source of the preparation to one who is examining a section of skin under the microscope. These outward things were a mere safeguard; yet every group he painted shows the importance he attached to the arrangement of objective detail. Every person sits exactly to a millimetre as Leibl designed, and not as it pleased himself, as some one has foolishly said. Where he left reality as it was, as he did in the case of all essentially immovable things, it was because it suited him. As for the most part he restricted himself to peasants and their surroundings, he met with fewer difficulties than would have been offered by cultured persons and cultured interiors.

Most modern painters determine the scheme of a picture in a superficial general sketch and then endeavour to preserve the freshness of the sketch in the completion

* Künstler-Monographien (Velhagen und Klaring, Bielfeld und Leipzig, 1901).



LEIBL: COCOTTE (1869)
SEEGER COLLECTION, BERLIN
BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOT. CO.

of the work. With Leibl on the contrary this first draft was the picture itself. This throws some light on the fact, * hardly conceivable as it is, that he used to begin with one feature of a face and finish it without reference to the rest. Leibl could see no reason why he should not begin by finishing the nose or the eye; on the contrary he had every motive for adopting this method provided his model's endurance held out. The ramifications of his system were so complicated that his only chance of arriving at a conception of the work as a whole was to fix some one point of it definitely by completing one detail of the picture, however minute. This point fixed, the system enabled him to analyse the image offered by Nature.

Here is to be found the explanation of the startling effect of the pieces cut out from his pictures. These pieces if regarded as parts of a copy of reality would be stupid enough. He knew what he was doing when he made these sections, for in making them he struck particularly good examples of his system, which perhaps would not have been so effective as parts of a whole.

One sometimes thinks that a section of this sort might with advantage have been made in Arnhold's picture, *The Village Politicians*, the unity of which seems to be imperilled by many contradictory elements.

Of course the painter's work rested on a foundation of extremely exact drawing. He first drew all the essential parts of the picture, then painted in the chief planes and rubbed the whole down with pumice-stone so that only a vague suggestion remained. Then the painting proper was begun. He was continually amending his work, the method, in his best days at least, always being to cut out any part of a picture that did not satisfy him. That is to say he scraped off that portion down to the wood of the panel and painted it over again from the beginning.

It sometimes turned out that the new piece was better than the rest and he was compelled to rub out other parts or even the whole. He thus gradually brought the work to an ever higher pitch of perfection, and the process I have described may have been very frequently repeated in the case of the *Women in Church*. This would explain the long time devoted to the work and at the same time the remarkable intensity of its charm. How he managed to efface all traces of this mosaic method remains inexplicable. It appears that in the case of the *Village Politicians* he did not always rub out to the very ground. While in his best works he always painted "alla prima," he probably sometimes left some remnants of the old colour when he repainted portions of the Arnhold picture.

Leibl's portraits, which he often finished in a few days, show that he could work as fast as Manet when he chose. The head of Schuch, which was originally a full length and was cut down, the portrait of Trübner and others, were painted in two days.†

Leibl's intermittent practice of concealing the processes of his technique, which was more or less pronounced at various periods of his career, and led at times to a high surface polish, is open to dispute. But his so-called "hardness" seems to me a thoroughly excellent quality, for the same reasons that make me prize the

* F. H. Meissner in his study on Leibl ("Deutsche Kunst," October 16, 1897), as well as G. Gronau n the biography above quoted record this. Meissner writes that Leibl began with the eye of the leading figure in the *Peasant Women in Church* and in the *Poacher*. I learnt from his friends that it was only in portraits that he painted in this way. Compare also Schlittgens' interesting "Erinnerung an Wilhelm Leibl" in "Kunst und Künstler," i. 4.

† Leibl regarded his portrait painting as a recreation. So far as I know he received hardly a single commission to paint a portrait and always presented the pictures to the sitters.

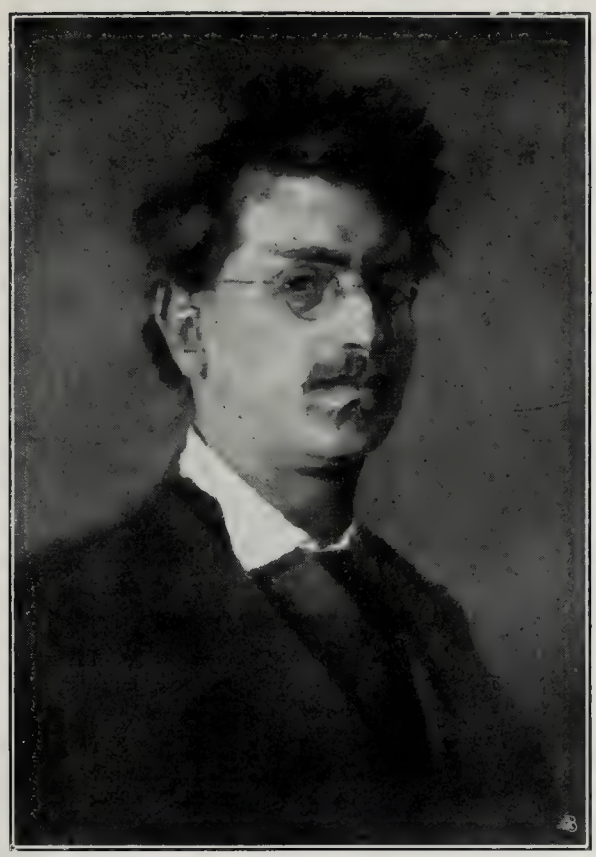
so-called hardness of Ingres. All such qualities are relative. "Hardness" on one side promotes tenderness on another. Ingres' perfect modelling could not have been achieved without his hardness. Leibl is a master of the same art. As opposed to Ingres' work Leibl's is Gothic, and indeed German Gothic, modelling which does not shrink from sharp angles. This tendency sets Leibl in opposition to the moderns. Manet would have put him on the same plane as Ingres.

This may be held indifferent or even honourable to Leibl's memory. The great fight for or against modelling involves an essential distinction of the greatest importance. I believe that it was only because Manet fought against it with his characteristic energy that he was able to prepare the way for a modern art of flat painting while at the same time he restored the tradition of the most important epochs of painting. Manet's significance, not in the relatively unimportant domain of Impressionism but in this evolution of an art of flat painting, is unquestionable ; and it is delightful to see the courage with which he despatched his opponents. But from the point of view of the universal history of art this significance does not in itself account for the high quality of the pleasure which we now derive from his works, and which our descendants will continue to enjoy even if the plane problem has by that time long since passed into a new phase. This value springs from the mastery with which Manet by virtue of his principles evolved a brilliant form for his creations. He is great not because he set the eye —that favourite detail of the old masters—like a fleck of colour in the face, but because his art in placing these spots created the marvellous material which so far he alone has given us in such perfection.

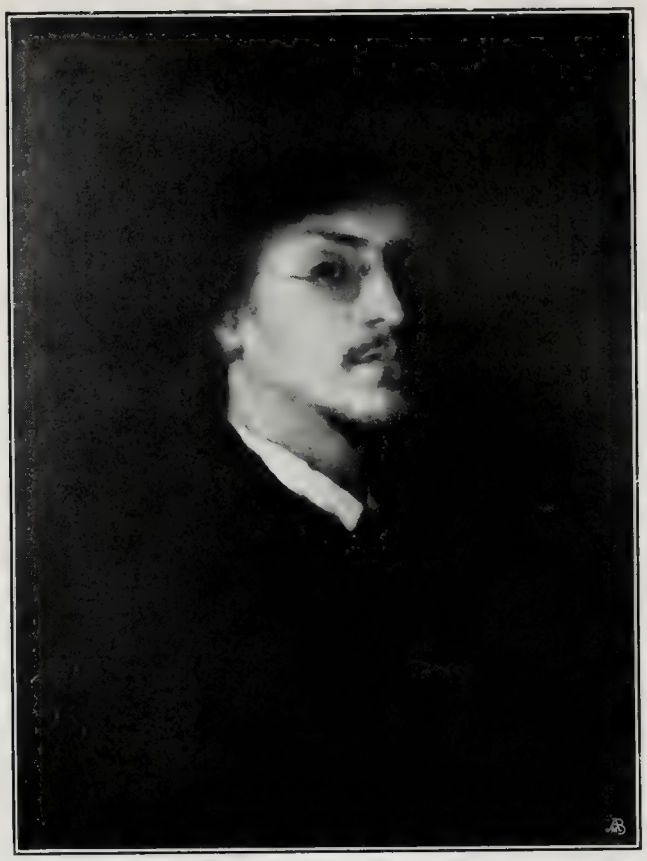
Leibl's present importance in the history of art seems by comparison very limited. No modern temperament will venture to present things in his manner again. He went back to the past, and his art, historically speaking, is a magnificent concentration (perhaps the last that we shall see) of the old rules of art which we have forsaken. On the other hand, independently of historic estimate, and from the standpoint of the history which only asks whether a picture is beautiful or not, Leibl's place is by the greatest. He is as secure as Rembrandt or Rubens. On his merits it is unnecessary to compare him with others. No one has ever surpassed the *Dachauerinnen* or the *Peasant Women in Church*, and the rejoinder that it would never occur to any to try is nothing to the purpose.

Having made this clear let us now see what Leibl did in Paris. The writer has purposely attempted to give a sketch of the master's art without starting at the beginning. For it was above all important to realise that Courbet, who met Leibl in the early days of his development, though not before he had done splendid things, had no real influence on the essential character of his work. We should be at pains to preserve the little that is exclusively our own.

The meeting with Courbet was, as Böcklin was fond of telling, hardly more than an exchange of toasts. Courbet had the French temperament. His passion fills his largest pictures with a clangorous harmony which falls mightily on the beholder and carries him away. Every stroke of his brush quivers with creative instinct. The more he subordinated himself to Nature the richer became the play of his genius. It was like a noble steed rearing under the bit. All his almost sexual passion for the earth, more monumentally recorded than in the prose of his relative Zola, is in his work, and all Manet's generation shared it. The wrangling between Manet and Courbet is a jocular altercation between brothers of different ages. The blood of the elder flows in Manet's pictures—we have only to examine



SCHUCH:
PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST (1876)
THE PROPERTY OF HIS WIDOW



HIRTH DU FRENES:
PORTRAIT OF SCHUCH (1874)
NEW PINACOTHEK, MUNICH



LEIBL: PORTRAIT OF SCHUCH (1866)
TRÜBNER COLLECTION, KARLSRUHE

the portrait of the dancer here reproduced—and Courbet himself is the youngest of the generation of Fontainebleau.

There is nothing of all this in Leibl. He had no family history which gave him any right to it. Where in our country is the generation of 1830 on which he could have leaned ? Where are the Daumiers and the Delacroix the great kindlers of colour ? Where is the host of the younger generation the lively earnest of the future ? He had to be more modest ; passion would have suited him ill.

Dürer's advice to the artist concerns both :

"The closer thy work accords with life in its forms the better thy work shall appear. This is the truth. Take it not therefore upon thyself to offer to make anything better than God hath given power to His creation to effect. For thy skill is powerless against God's creation. No man surely can ever make a fine picture of his own device, if he have not filled his head with much planning. But this is not to be called his own work but is art, handed down and learned, which sows itself, groweth, and bringeth forth fruit after its kind. And thence is made manifest the gathered secret treasure of the heart through the work and the new creature which a man may create in his soul."

It would be interesting to have Leibl's letters from Paris. Six years before his arrival Manet had painted *Olympia* and the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, his two decisive things. They were hanging quietly in his studio among the fifty works shown at the exhibition at the Pont de l'Alma in the year 1867. Leibl never went to see them. It is doubtful whether he ever knew the creator of Olympia at all. At Paris he lived in the set of Courbet and Alfred Stevens which was not in touch with the Ecole de Batignolles, and if he had any opinion on Manet no doubt he shared that of his friends or at least that of the great Daumier—" Manet sickens us of the painting of the schools without making us like his own." And as Leibl did not see this natural continuation of the French leader, he missed what was capable of development, the Spanish element in Courbet. It was not in his race, he was much too simple to wish to master it, and we have no reason to regret this. He could only give what he had after the manner of the German old masters—a limitation with which the Leibl school had afterwards to reckon.

Leibl owed a model to his Parisian episode. He saw for the first time an elaborately dressed Parisienne without a crease, clean, not in the German sense of the term, which is never free from an aroma of soap, but dainty, fragrant, very delicate of flesh, powdered and manicured to a nicety. He saw a hand lying on a pillow with voluptuously extended fingers which had never sought to make the acquaintance of any harder material, and which of all the things they might have achieved had only learned how to caress. The other hand, holding between three fingers a long thin tube, played idly in the air. Small wonder that this comely piece of flesh which one divines in its dazzling whiteness through the dark stuff of the dress as a sun behind clouds, had a magnetic attraction for the German artist, and that he produced the remarkable *Cocotte* of 1869. It is our *Olympia*.

It is significant, I might almost say it is essential, for the understanding of the difference between our art and the French to note how the two greatest representatives of either race arranged their respective masterpieces, the milieu, and therefore the conditoins being much the same in each case. The one gave his cocotte naked, showing his greatness in the nude ; the other left her clothed, revealing himself no less significantly by this means. The one when he painted his most important group planted naked women among clothed men in the open

air; the other dressed his women in all the clothes they could carry, set them in a church and put prayer books in their hands. We see different habits of life, opposed systems of morals, races fundamentally diverse, each of which keeps to that which is suited to its own needs. The *Olympia* is the re-awakening of Titian who painted the most womanly of nudities, the Queen of the Tribuna. The *Cocotte* is the relative femininity of the race that created Holbein's men. The difference is the difference in age of the two cultures; it is all to the advantage of the Latin who is old enough to have had a glimpse of the Gods of Greece and it is our misfortune that we were Christians when we first appeared in history. Whenever we try our skill in the field which our neighbours have made their own the ultimate felicities will escape us, because those who possess all the qualities of our race in that intensity which impels a man to produce great work never either can or will bring themselves to paint their *Cocottes* nude. Even in the first flush of northern painting, when the mighty genius of Van Eyck was dominating all northern artists, the difference was already manifest. Fouquet's masterpiece, *The Virgin with the Child*, in the Antwerp Museum, could only have been painted by a Frenchman. You may find a suggestion of Van Eyck's manner in the Child, but the grace with which Fouquet used the mistress of Charles VII. as his model for the Madonna, the all but imperceptible and yet seductive coquetry of the charming figure with the half-open bodice disclosing one breast, is as thoroughly French as if it had been painted by a master of the eighteenth century. The *Eve* at Brussels should be compared with this picture. In the presence of this colossal conception of the first woman in whose body all humanity is slumbering the other artist is forgotten, but so also are all those poetic feelings which are excited by the beauty of women.

No one could think of Van Eyck's Adam as beautiful; his Eve is more than fair. She is the rib that was taken from the man. Fouquet was the first to paint woman independently of man and his Madonna is already the charming goddess at whose feet men lie prostrate.

The true German has never painted woman as woman. Were he to do so he would lie, not only because Agnes Sorels are absent from our history, but also because in all our philosophy there is no place for such. It is mere perversity to extract from Cranach something allied to the French manner. He had to hide himself behind some lustful old man in order to impart coquetry to his women. This is not coquetry in the French sense. There is as little lust in the intention of *Olympia* as there is effeminacy in Manet, the most virile of French painters, who reminds us, not unworthily, of Frans Hals.

Leibl's painting in all its successive stages never again reached the perfection of the *Cocotte*. This was natural enough: he was never again exposed to such seductions, and in most of his other works he was obliged to regard painting in the French sense merely as a stage to be passed through. But though in the works to which he gave complete a pictorial envelope the monumental quality of the *Women in Church* is lacking, the material contained in these frequently unfinished pictures is all the more precious. How wide was the range of his art, even where it only aims at rendering Nature, may be seen in the three portraits in the museum of his native town of Cologne, the early picture of his father where all his art seems to be devoted to the portrayal of the narrow, close buttoned correctness of the old gentleman, the blonde study of the man with the brown hat, one of his greatest works, which

approaches certain portraits by Marées', and finally the masterly portrait of Pallenberg, of 1871, with its wonderful flesh painting. Nothing better has ever been done in Germany.

His brushwork always keeps itself aloof from the thick colour of the moderns, but the spontaneity and the vivacity of this style are by no means foreign to him. Even in his later days he handled his canvas with great care. Such studies as the man's head with the hat in the Stuttgart Gallery astonish us by the virtuosity of the method. The painting is here a combination of very various but quite distinct textures, but even when the brush is most vigorous, it remains quite flat. Some parts seem to have been painted in with a broad, fine-haired brush. As always, the tone-values are extraordinarily sure; the degradations are so delicate that they seem to arise out of the very flatness of the fine-haired brush-strokes. This flatness with Liebl is always one means among others; it is contrasted with certain other methods of treatment and springs from them on certain occasions when it makes for emphasis and gives a climax in the effect often coinciding with the point of highest light. One never, to my knowledge, finds in Leibl that splashing method which was introduced into Germany by Liebermann; the details are always fused in the whole. Leibl would have received the applause of Vasari and the approval of Holbein. Yet the pictorial qualities of his painting had in one sense a strong progressive significance. The bold schemes of his division of masses are astonishing, especially in his sketches. His use of straight lines in composition and especially of rectangles in his doors and windows to secure a restful arrangement, reinforce his curved lines by a sort of solid construction. The fine sketch made late in his career (1899) of the young girl by the door, now in the New Pinakothek at Munich, is one example among many. He borrowed these principles from the old Dutchmen but there was genius in the way in which he renewed them and they have become indispensable to German painting.

Leibl's material fortunes, and to a certain extent his artistic destiny, were determined by his seclusion. This great man, like Feuerbach and Marées, also worked in loneliness. After a brilliant beginning, in which he was assisted by his reception in Paris, the success of his pictures steadily fell off. His *Women in Church* seemed to be the beginning of better things. The few friends who had remained faithful to Leibl at Munich, above all Gedon, saw the picture at Aibling in 1881 and persuaded the artist to exhibit it alone * in Munich.

The success of the exhibition was gratifying; artists made pilgrimages to see the picture. Leibl, under the advice of Gedon who wrote to Goupil, Schön, and other amateurs, determined to ask 100,000 marks for the picture. Goupil came and declined the bargain. A German amateur offered 50,000 marks. Leibl committed the imprudence of not closing with the offer at once, and by the time he did accept, keen competitors had taught the amateur a better way of disposing of his money. It was only a year later, after the picture had been tested by a series of triumphs at the exhibitions, that it passed into the hands of this buyer at a greatly reduced price. The greatest calamity that befell Leibl was the failure in Paris in 1888 of *The Poachers*, the picture on which he had worked with high hopes for several years. How far the Paris public was right in disappointing the artist it is impossible to say now that the painter has cut the picture to pieces. To judge by the fragments in Seeger's possession it must have been a remarkable work.

* In the building of the Künstlerunterstützungsverein in the Augustenstrasse. The entry money went into the coffers of the society.

Leibl never recovered from this blow ; his disease itself seems to have originated at this time. He retired into complete seclusion with his faithful Sperl. In the middle of the nineties he was aroused. The idea was mooted of arranging a show of his collected works at the great Berlin exhibition and the managers applied to Trübner as they could get no reply from Leibl. Trübner drove out and found the artist already so far gone in the German disease of loneliness, for which it remains to discover a specific name, that it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be persuaded to take any part in the scheme. * The triumph caused by this revelation of his work to an astonished multitude seemed to cause him little pleasure.

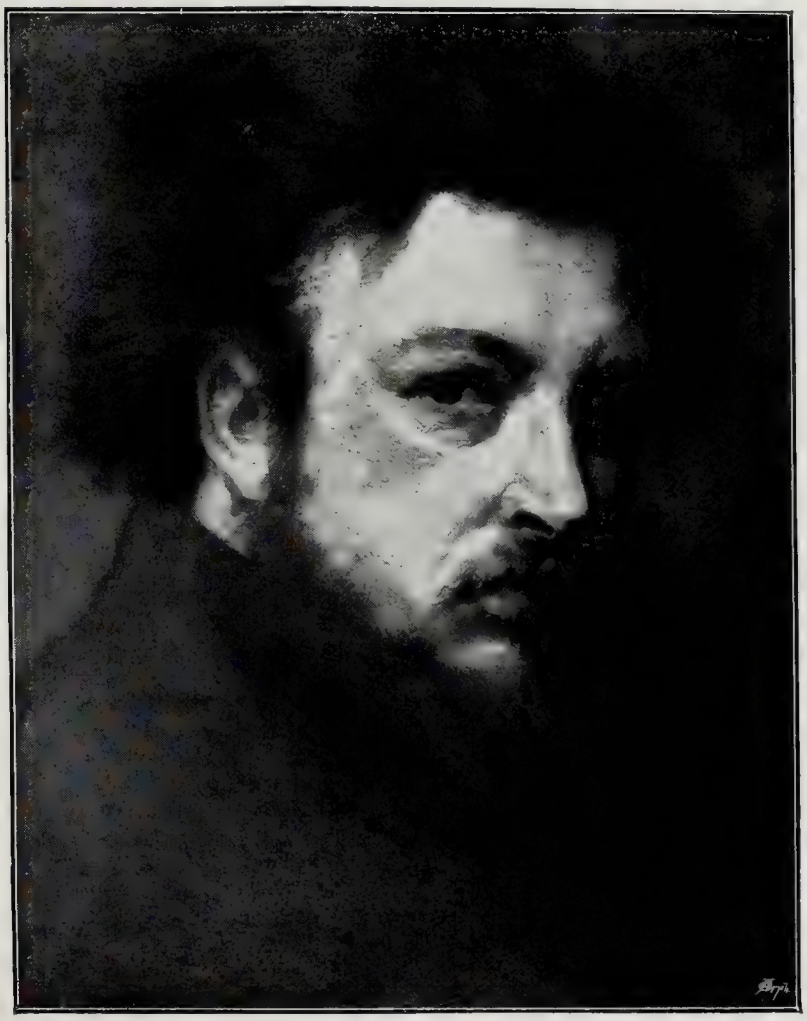
* A passage from Schlittgen will illustrate the psychology of his loneliness :

" Leibl used to relate with great bitterness how in his early days pictures of his had been ' improved.' Either he had not painted them well enough, in which case individual passages were painted over to make them better, or they were too empty, in which case something used to be painted in.

" One evening a painter appeared at our table (at Aibling). As usual, Leibl was very reserved with the visitor who, in order to make a good impression, began, ' You will be surprised, Herr Professor, to learn that I am a collaborator of yours.' Leibl looked sharply at the collaborator. ' Yes, I once put a piece of background into one of your pictures ' (then slyly), ' you had taken it rather easy over that background ; anyhow, nohow, you know ! ' Leibl sprang up, and I thought that something terrible would happen, but he mastered himself and went out into the garden. As he did not return I grew anxious and went out to look for him. He was striding up and down and cried, ' Is that man still there ? I'll knock him down.' I succeeded at last in calming him, but our guest had to content himself with a view of Leibl's back for the rest of the evening. Without a notion that he had offended, he whispered to me : ' Leibl is really very unapproachable ! ' "



HANS VON MARÉES: PORTRAIT OF LENBACH AND MARÉES
SCHLEISSHEIM GALLERY



VICTOR MÜLLER: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST
MÜLLER COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

THE SCHOOL OF LEIBL

It might be demonstrated that all the important German artists who do not belong to the composition school discussed in the first section of this book are in the closest relation with Leibl. In view of the solitude to which the Aibling master condemned himself this is remarkable enough. But he makes himself felt even within the borders of the composition school itself. He is, in fact, indirectly connected with it, and among the artists of his immediate circle there were not a few who forsook him and went over to Böcklin, while some hesitated all their lives between these two very different tendencies. Victor Müller, Feuerbach's friend, gives the immediate connecting link. His importance lay more in the influence that he acquired than in any performance of his own, and he has the credit of having encouraged Leibl himself.

Müller's work is the art of the transition. He was a true romantic, studied with Feuerbach at Antwerp, and then with Couture, whose flabby ineptitude he recognised. He had a glimpse of Courbet, but had no time to work out the consequences of this discovery though he handed them on to others. For Müller too was of the elect who pay for a premature grasp of new knowledge by an early death.

The small collection piously maintained by the artist's son, Dr. Müller, at Frankfort suggests a temperament to whom it was not given to sound the depths. The *Schneewittchen* at Frankfort, the study for which is in the Berlin National Gallery, is far the best example of his work with its fresh colour and its rare grace of composition. It has the charming directness of the sketch with an added richness. In most of his other pictures the impression tends to fade; his romanticism often betrays him into the laxities of his Paris teacher. The half-length of Herodias suggests a relative of Makart with a greater gift than he. The companion of this picture in the collection is more effective, it is also a woman with her bosom exposed; the blonde hair and the rosy flesh tints of the face are very fine. Müller is always entirely pictorial. In his drawings he gets rid of the hard pencil lines of the German illustrators, but sometimes only to fall into the effeminacy of the French epigoni. I cannot quite understand the attempt of Müller's biographers, even of Berlepsch, in his loyal and penetrating study,* to found his claim to be a great colourist on later pictures. In the *Hamlet* at the Städel Institute the gray note is not carried out with sufficient completeness to allow of a perfectly undisturbed satisfaction. In the *Romeo* and *Juliet* of the Pinakothek the beautiful detail of the drapery does not atone for a certain staginess. It is only necessary to think of Feuerbach in order to have the contrast of a real colourist who always understands how to adorn his form with colour.

But Victor Müller was a painter. The vapourous beauty of such a portrait as the child with the dog maintains its charm even yet, and the portrait of himself in

* "Die Kunst für Alle," December 15, 1896, with many Plates.

Dr. Müller's collection shows a very profound * pictorial sense. Such pictures show clearly the influence of Courbet's *L'Homme blessé* and other pictures and show what it was that Leibl learned from Müller. The greatest benefit however that Müller conferred upon Leibl was that he made him acquainted with the great Frenchmen. He himself lacked the strong essence of Courbet, and more still the Holbein tradition which Leibl added to this.

Strict observation of Nature was Leibl's substitute for romantic leanings. He was the first German who came back from Paris without bringing with him an atom of Couture. The uncompromising character of his art resulted in a marked artistic antagonism between him and Victor Müller which, however, had no effect upon their personal relations. In 1870 we find the two parties definitely constituted. On the one side stand Müller, Böcklin, Henneberg, and others; their quondam associate Feuerbach eclipsed them all. On the other side was Leibl. For a moment his party seemed likely to prove the stronger. A splendid host of talented artists gathered round the youthful leader. There were Munkacsy, Eysen, Karl Haider and Thoma, besides his old friends of Ramberg's school—Theodor Alt, Rudolf Hirth du Frênes, Schider, Sperl,† and finally Trübner, with his friends Karl Schuch and Albert Lang.

Müller's art was too incomplete to be a very strong stimulant to others. Of his more immediate circle Burnitz ‡ alone is important. He was a few years older than his friend and had worked at Paris with the painters of Fontainebleau. Like Eysen he produced landscapes restful in feeling and refined in tone. Anton Burger, the scholar of Veit, was a forerunner of the school of Frankfort, where one finds many beautiful pictures by him. He was the first German to discover Courbet in Paris (in the fifties) and at Cronberg he became the head of a school § of some importance, in which Burnitz, who took up painting comparatively late, was a pupil. Some half successful attempts of Scholderer's are preserved. ‖

Leibl, on the other hand, had every quality necessary in a leader. Above all he was a model of certainty in his mastery of the means of his art; every stage was perfection. He had moreover the one-sideness which is appropriate in a prophet,

* Müller had manifestly too much of the merit which the other Germans lacked, and did not quite master the seductions of the picturesque. The portrait of Scholderer, his brother-in-law, in the same collection, depends for its effect on the blurring of the outlines, which is carried to an extreme. In the large sketch which Dr. Müller has lately discovered, the woman sitting in the open air, one sees clearly that the colour was an afterthought. The chief picture in the collection, a subject from Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables," hardly comes within the sphere of artistic interest.

For Müller (as for most of his friends at Antwerp and Paris) a strong dose of Delacroix would have been veritable manna. We can find but very superficial traces of that influence of Delacroix on Müller, of which Muther speaks in his "History of Painting in the Nineteenth Century." Müller's romanticism had nothing to do with Delacroix. It was merely Couture. On the other hand, he may have seen Corot.

† Schider and Sperl were not influenced by Leibl from the first; they began as genre painters after the fashion of Ramberg. Schider, an Austrian by birth, was not very fertile as a painter, and is now professor in the Arts and Crafts School at Bâle. Sperl shared Leibl's exile in the country, and his devotion was rewarded by Leibl, who occasionally painted figures in his landscapes.

‡ Unfortunately, he is poorly represented in the public galleries. There are many beautiful things of his in private collections at Frankfort, the best of them in the possession of Dr. Müller, above referred to, who also possesses early examples of Thoma. The picture in the Berlin National Gallery is not one of his best. Eysen is another artist who is absent from our galleries. Besides the beautiful picture in the Berlin National Gallery, the only picture of his we have is, so far as I know, the charming forest study with the high lights in the Städel Institute.

§ Heinrich Weizsäcker has treated of the Cronberg School in "Pan" (1897, iii. 4).

‖ Scholderer oscillated between Müller and Thoma, with whom he became associated at Düsseldorf. He ruined himself utterly in London and in his old age returned to Frankfort, where he died six years ago.



VICTOR MÜLLER: PORTRAIT OF A CHILD

MÜLLER COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

and a power of personal suggestion which was never negligible and often drastic. He used to thunder mightily against the fantastic art which unlike that of Titian, Rubens, Holbein and Dürer was not founded on Nature and which attempted vast compositions before it had mastered heads and hands lifesize. Böcklin and Lenbach, especially Lenbach, were very severely handled. With his passion for the old masters Leibl naturally regarded the coloured photographs of certain eminent persons, à la Rembrandt, à la Van Dyck, à la Reynolds as a decorative imposture. He honoured the profound honesty of the ancients and approached them with a kindred depth of feeling. This was the best lesson that he taught his friends.

Munkacsy had a large share in promoting Leibl's reputation, and he carried on his influence in a remarkable way. The Hungarian who was soon to become famous divided himself, so to say, between Alfred Stevens, who had been a friend of Leibl's in the Paris days, and Leibl himself, but he announced himself as Leibl's pupil whenever he exhibited. At first he painted quite in the style of his master ; this is apparent even so late as in the celebrated picture, *Milton dictating Paradise Lost.* In *Christ before Pilate* the technique is also quite that of Leibl and his best portraits are very near the manner of his teacher. There is no essential difference between the old Hungarian woman in the Cologne Museum and Leibl's above-mentioned study of the man which hangs on the same wall. Munkacsy all his life remained faithful to Leibl's sombre colour, but instead of Leibl's ivory black he used exclusively asphaltum which gave his pictures the greasy brown tone of Lenbach's. Munkacsy went backward instead of forward, and even in the eighties his powers were constantly waning. His illness may have contributed to this. We have him to thank for Liebermann's connection with the Aibling master and to some extent also for Uhde's attachment to him.

The Munich clique at first exhibited all the outward signs of a strictly organised school ; there was a common code of rules the observance of which gave an air of similarity to the earlier pictures of Alt, Hirth, Trübner, Lang and the rest. The chief rule was strict observation of Nature, and the fine old painter's ideal of painting pictures to be as durable as possible, which Leibl declared could only be attained by " alla prima " painting. Time has already proved that he was right. For time has begun that mysterious process of completion which is the reward of excellent handiwork and which has given to the pictures of this school that wonderful fusion of colour we are accustomed to admire only in the works of the old masters.

Leibl's portraits in the sixties mark the richest period of his artistic work. Marées himself may here have given and received benefit. The Hildebrand-Grant portrait (1871) most certainly stands in the closest relation to these great days. In 1874 Trübner and Hirth, following the example set by Leibl in 1866, painted their friend Schuch, a portrait of whom by himself is also extant. These four portraits from the same model, which are here reproduced together, show how little the external relations of the artists hindered the growth of their respective individualities.

Hirth had at this time a short and happy period. The gay sketch of Leibl and Sperl sitting together in a boat which hangs in a corner at Carlsruhe shows a rapid grasp of the essential which gives a value to its hastiness and is much superior to the later picture at Breslau,* *The Hop-pickers.* Carlsruhe also owns

* Painted in 1879. Besides this the Museum at Breslau has a dark study of a head by Hirth. As far as can be seen (it is hung very high) it is unimportant At Emil Richter's art-gallery at Dresden, a fairly

the bright little landscape by Lang with its beautiful trees on a lush water-meadow, painted in delicate gray-blue-green tones reminiscent of water-colour. Albert Lang was originally an architect, and entered Leibl's circle as a painter along with Trübner. At first his progress was remarkable and he produced many fine studies, especially of still life, in the powerful manner of his teacher. Under the influence of Böcklin and of a misunderstanding of the later manner of Marées, he turned from the true path and since his association with Thoma at Frankfort in the eighties he has done nothing of any importance. His female portrait at Carlsruhe, painted in the year 1891, is typical of his decline.

This aberration did not stand alone. Leibl's influence declined as Böcklin's approached its supremacy. Moreover his disciples could not follow his development from painting to draughtsmanship without stumbling. Such a development was too individual to succeed perfectly with any one but Leibl himself, or at all events was suited only to a special genius like Karl Haider, whom it encouraged in a narrowly conceived imitation of the old masters. Most of the others were landed in errors which had serious consequences, for they thought they could correct the so-called deficiencies of the later Leibls in pictorial effects by an infusion of Böcklin.

* * * * * * *

This is the case with Thoma. He began under the happiest auspices. As opposed to Leibl he was fundamentally a draughtsman. Thoma reproduced Schirmer's dryness in his peasant figures, but unlike his teacher he took care that they were sincere. Just as, even in his latest pictures, one divines the porcelain worker of Limoges in Renoir, there always remained in Thoma a remnant of the honest, clumsy handicraftsman who had seen the wood carving of the Black Forest, and whose original occupation had been sign painting. He drew what he saw simply and neatly without passing beyond the intellectual horizon of a man of his origin. Before his journey to Paris his pictures represent the impression made by Courbet on a naïve intelligence. It is possible that when he was producing the peasant pictures of the middle sixties he as yet knew nothing of Courbet. The manner is so natural that any man sound of limb could discover it for himself. *Sunday Morning*, the picture of the grandmother with the cloth on her head and her spectacles on her nose, with the little girl near by who is reading the Bible with her is an artless emanation of the honesty which afterwards inspired Leibl's more refined creations in his epoch of draughtsmanship. It is old German without being Holbein. The young girl writing a letter, the drawing from which he made a lithograph twenty-five years later, is real German peasant art. There is a whole world between it and Leibl's supreme drawings, but the spirit is the same. Such phenomena appeared in the great ages of craftsmanship, when in the country or in little towns men untouched by direct artistic influences produced sincere and convincing work, unimportant indeed to the connoisseur, but displaying a high and growing development of popular culture. It is a thousand pities that nowadays such men are confined to the artistic life of cities, that they cannot remain among the people to whom they belong, and that there is no longer any public for a truly popular art. Such men are now made directors of academies and professors, while the Leibls of our generation, the great men who come to grips with the highest

large number of Hirth's works were brought together in January 1903, besides some pictures by Sperl and Alt. There are biographical notes on Hirth in a memoir by Robert Bruck in the "Dresdner Anzeiger" of September 1, 1903, No. 242.



HANS THOMA: FLOWER PIECE

ULLMANN COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

problems of art and who know more of it than any scholar, the men who could teach again the things that have been forgotten and for lack of whom our schools are languishing, are banished to live among the peasants.

We cannot hold Thoma responsible for what he became. He is a symptom of that very perversity which, neglecting our villages and filling our towns to overflowing with the proletariat, brings industrialism into matters to which it has no application. Just as Marées lacked a basis for his art, Thoma could find no foundation for his handicraft. Several of his observations show that the situation weighed upon his mind for a long time. When he became known the crafts had reached their lowest ebb in Germany. Even book illustration was in a hopeless condition. Perhaps posterity will prize most highly what Thoma achieved in this art, the only one which he completely mastered. Of this he might have made almost anything.

As a painter Thoma made one very energetic effort to obtain a thorough technical grounding. He went to Paris in the year 1868. The event could not be doubtful; Thoma was as much in his element in Paris as "une dame de chez Maxim" at Bernau. It is extraordinary that in spite of this it was he, the German miller's son, who clearly recognised the new man in Paris who was to determine the destinies of art. Edouard Manet was not discovered by Liebermann but by Hans Thoma. On his return to Germany he spoke with enthusiasm of the painter of *Olympia*, and had no small share in introducing Manet to Leibl's circle at Munich. Meanwhile Leibl too had been in Paris. Perhaps he saw in Manet merely a colleague who stood in the same relation to Courbet as he did himself, and whom he had therefore a perfect right to consider negligible. Thoma seems to have realised the profound difference between the two Frenchmen ; perhaps this was owing to an unconscious feeling of weakness which made a breach with convention more than welcome to him. Of course he made a terrible mistake when he thought himself in sympathy with Manet's disdain of effects of shadow. Manet had no need of the method of Courbet and Leibl. Thoma was incapable of it and had nothing to put in its place.

The artist's best works belong to this time. * His pictures were full of sunshine ; he painted interiors with sunlit figures half lifesize. There is, among others, a charming portrait of his mother sitting in a room with patches of sunlight on the floor. In another picture there is a girl standing on the shore with the foliage of a tree about her. All these pictures are painted strictly from Nature and with a warm pictorial feeling. Manet's influence, which is traceable in all these pictures, but which, owing to Thoma's entirely antagonistic nature, only produces a marked inclination towards the French school, is at its strongest in the still-life pictures of the year 1870. One of these fine flower studies, from the Ullmann collection in Frankfort, is reproduced here.†

The years he spent in Munich brought him into touch with the best German artists. The one disadvantage was that too great a demand was made on the resisting powers of a weak nature, or rather on its assimilative capacity. Perhaps he dreamed of a compromise between the opposed influences of Leibl and Böcklin. Such a compromise would have been possible if their differences on external

* Ostini in his biography of Thoma (Velhagen and Klasing) mentions many pictures of this period which Thoma painted over and so destroyed in order to conciliate the public.

† In Herr Albert Ullmann's house there are also early frescoes (alluded to below), which Thoma painted for Herr Albert Gerlach, the former owner. There are not four landscapes, as Ostini says, but six, exclusive of the dessus de porte. They were painted in 1874.

matters had had an identical artistic basis as was the case with Leibl in his early days and the painter of *Schneewittchen*. Between Leibl and Böcklin, regarded from a purely æsthetic point of view, no bridge was possible. It was a question of art or no art, for Böcklin's very individual power of sometimes producing comparatively good things in spite of his insecure basis, was in no sense communicable to others. A journey to Italy, where he learned to know the early Florentines and made the acquaintance of Marées, confused Thoma still further. At first there is little trace of all this. The frescoes which he painted for Herr Gerlach at Frankfort after he came back from Italy are obviously the work of an honest man whose power breaks down before vast surfaces, and who prefers to keep himself simply and modestly to natural objects and not to risk his neck in wild experiments. The pictures down to the small dessus de porte, probably of later date, have a pleasing effect. What a gulf there is between them and the wretched frescoes of the Ravenstein house, which date from the early eighties !

In these garden room pictures Victor Müller's influence is obvious, especially in the dancing children, a subject which he often repeated. The height of the room no doubt determined that of the trees, but this is nothing ; the idea is charming. Why should this modest man have given up painting idyls ?

Thoma could never create Müller's " envelope " which is so delightful in the *Schneewittchen* pictures. He lost his friend and teacher too soon. Moreover like Leibl he grew harder and harder as the years passed, but while Leibl attained to a fuller revelation of the beauty of his art, Thoma unveiled what he should have kept hidden.

The flowering time of Thoma's art ended with its first ten years, which should only have been the beginning. Compared with what followed one is compelled to say that it attained its relative perfection in that time.

The Leibl circle was broken up about 1877. Thoma, Haider and Hirth married and left Munich. Trübner had for some time been frequently absent on his travels. The unhappy Alt was in an asylum. Schider went to Bâle ; Leibl himself to the country, and the master's influence on his associates vanished as soon as his personal admonitions were withdrawn. Of all that he had learned Thoma took little that was of any use with him to Frankfort. He forgot the lessons of Manet and Leibl, who had taught him to keep Nature ever before his eyes and reduced the influence of Müller, who had combined poetic sentiment with painting from Nature, to a purely objective sphere. His colleagues at Frankfort, Steinhausen, Von Pidoll and others, were no substitute for the healthy atmosphere of the Munich circle. Pidoll's enthusiasm for his master produced the most unfortunate effects on Thoma. What could a peasant's son make of the solemn palaces of Marées' architecture ? He was rather of the type of Anton Burger, the old Cronberger, but he lacked that small but safe world in which one may with impunity abandon a strict dependence on Nature.

Thoma, moreover, was no doubt driven to superficial work by the increasing needs of his family. He produced a great deal and constantly repeated himself. These repetitions, which with some artists answer to some inner purpose and result at least in some sort of subjective improvement, led in Thoma's case to a horrible mannerism. His work was a continual decline, and though he was fortunate in being unconscious of this deterioration, one can only regret that the public administration of the Fine Arts first thought of him when he was reduced to a shadow of his former merit. So far as I know the Berlin National Gallery only

possesses one good landscape by him, a work of his earlier days, due to the generosity of Trübner. The woman at the pillar with the flowers which is in the Gallery at Carlsruhe is the happiest manifestation of his Italian sojourn. In the Taunus landscape of 1890 in the Pinakothek there is a vivid memory of his early promise; and in the *Naiad* at Stuttgart the influence of Marées may be said to be unobjectionable. The lithograph (1894) of the same subject is bad.

In the same gallery hangs one of his later landscapes which is contemporary with the *Naiad*. In this picture the composition is entirely haphazard; the figures are an afterthought; there is a complete want of any underlying purpose which could assist the superficial and symbolic meaning.

The whole foreshadows the coarseness of Thoma's latest developments which it is unnecessary to discuss here.

Thoma deliberately turns his back on Nature, although in honesty he has no right to be anything but a naturalist, as Leibl was falsely represented to be by people who did not understand him. In the many discussions on naturalism an important fact has been overlooked—the intellectual honesty of this method, its avoidance of humbug. Only a thorough discipline in the study of previous achievement might possibly have enabled Thoma to find a substitute for Nature. In an age in which a feeling for style was strong and universal he might have become a good stylist. It is preposterous to suppose that such incompetence can supply the great want of our time.

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It is much to be hoped that the art-history of the future will veto the grotesque antithesis implied in the terms "imaginative art" and "realistic art." In Art as in Nature, life is everything. The place, the man, the animal, the object in a picture, are alike unimportant and give no notion of the nature of the work. Only one of the customary categories—history, portraiture, religious painting—has a grain of meaning: still life. We can never begin to enjoy art, till we have learnt to look upon every picture as still life. Leibl's importance to Germany, apart from his artistic achievement, lies in his propagation of this simple truth. Few of his inner circle remain; that of the future will be all the greater.

Only one of his pupils has remained faithful to him to this day: Wilhelm Trübner.

WILHELM TRÜBNER

Trübner is the outcome of Leibl the colourist. Leibl is the archetypal German, the successor of Holbein, whose task it was to express himself as a draughtsman. In Trübner we recognise that variant of the German genius which was produced in Holland a century after the painter of the English portraits.

This tendency of Trübner was scarcely obvious in his first work (the two figures at prayer in church) which is in the Carlsruhe Gallery; it was painted in his twentieth year. The picture displays the colourless dryness of the Carlsruhe school; but there is a realism in the drawing, a certainty in the structure of the figures sitting behind each other, which places the future of his talent beyond doubt. Its natural destiny, however, would have seemed to be the emulation of Leibl's *Women in Church.*

A very sound instinct restrained Trübner from this course. The danger which Leibl successfully defied in this celebrated picture is well known, indeed I think it has been overestimated. In his study of Trübner * Rosenhagen considers that Leibl reached a " dead point " when he had finished the Worms picture, and he probably means by this that, after this venture, the artist should have been content to sing his Nunc dimittis. It is given to very few people to exhaust themselves so completely in a single work that there is nothing further left to them but to accept immortality. For contemporaries such points are indispensable; they have the value of the fixed stars which guide the traveller, not to mount the sky, but to find his way upon the earth. The principle of Leibl's art is to be found neither in colour nor in draughtsmanship, it lies in the perfect fusion of the two. Like all facts it evades theory and it is unduly belittled if one regards it merely as the realisation of a tendency. It is only to contemporaries that these heights of achievement appear to be isolated in a deathlike loneliness. They leave the circle of customary evolution and seem to exhaust the possibilities of progress. But was this not so with the contemporaries who understood the perfection of Ingres? Did not all progress seem impossible after Leonardo da Vinci? And among the Greeks who would have dared to dream of an evolution transcending Phidias? Yet there always comes a generation that suddenly transforms the most daring monuments of tradition into the stone of new buildings, and ever demonstrates anew the ineradicable vitality of these " dead points."

This may be the case with Leibl. He seems to be a conclusion, the end of a whole world, only to the generation of painters which is following the very path that he forsook. I can easily conceive a monumental art to which Leibl's drawing would offer patterns of design. That our eyes cannot discern such an art to-day proves nothing. The star-like remoteness of his creations merely suggests that other generations may come nearer to them on the other side of the firmament.

Trübner's soundness was shown by his recognition that in drawing he had

* " Kunst für Alle," May 15, 1902, with many plates.



TRÜBNER: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST (1902)
TRÜBNER COLLECTION, KARLSRUHE

nothing to look for; his instinct was attracted towards another consummation which his master had only touched in passing.

In this Feuerbach may have guided him. Trübner's father, a Heidelberg goldsmith of the good old days, showed Feuerbach his son's first attempts at drawing. The artist declared they were better than what he himself had done at that age, and the father made up his mind to consent to his son's choice of a profession. The painter of *Medea* acted as a stimulus to Trübner in later days when he had attained his full artistic stature, and this relationship between two such characteristic representatives of the two diametrically opposed tendencies in German art is not without significance. It shows how little such an opposition matters so long as there is agreement in essentials—and talent!

Trübner's relation to Leibl was like that of Monet to Manet. In comparing this epoch in Germany with the almost contemporary artistic period in France we must begin by getting rid of all idea of direct resemblance.

The irreconcilable difference lies in the want of any essential relation between the respective protagonists of which we have already spoken in the chapter on Leibl. Apart from this there are parallel phenomena. Leibl created a school of German painters in succession to Holbein, and left it in order to follow his own star. Manet did much the same thing in France; manifold as were his relations with his school he always held himself apart in all essentials from the development he had brought about in Monet. Trübner and Monet (each in his own way) are more normal and more logical than their respective masters; both have the instinct of organisation, each consciously seeks to pay the price for his genius. Monet was the more fortunate because he found the path already indicated for him by his predecessors, and because he had a milieu of his own and friends who were ready to follow and therefore to help him. Trübner, like every gifted German, was alone. Beyond the development of Leibl, who drew away from him as he did from others, he had no models to look to. The field was ploughed but no one could guess what the crop would be. Artistic problems had absolutely no interest for his immediate contemporaries, and in the past history of Germany there was not the slightest indication of the path that must be followed. Trübner hit upon the only sensible issue from the difficulty, which was to look for guidance by studying the ancient art of other countries. It was the only intelligible part of the programme of Leibl, Feuerbach, Lenbach and the rest, that he could put in practice. They had all clearly referred him to the old masters instead of themselves laying down precise courses of study. Each man was to seek what was necessary to his purpose.

The natural evolution of the national art, which was the guiding star of the French, was quite wanting in Germany. Manet, when he absorbed a foreign Spanish element into his art, was almost more national than Leibl when he strove to follow in Holbein's footsteps. Manet's work was fruiful exceedingly; others might share in it, might see in it a symbol which had some meaning for them, even when the master chose to go his own way. Leibl brought his school, not himself, to a "dead point"; or he would, had they followed him.

In these circumstances Trübner took the only rational course. He studied the ancients with great intelligence; in the winter of 1872–1873 the Italian galleries, next all those of Holland and Belgium; he had already gone through the German museums in 1870. The only ones he did not see were the most necessary to him, the French. Except for a single week in the year 1879 and 1889

respectively he never visited Paris, and on both these occasions the Great Exhibitions monopolised the attention of the sightseer.

He had of course, seen the French pictures at Munich in the famous exhibition of 1869; but this was too early for him. He was then only 18, hardly out of Canon's school, and unable to begin at the point where he was destined to end. This exhibition, the memory of which even yet stirs the enthusiasm of those who can remember it, remained an isolated event.* One cannot help considering what Germany would have gained if it had been the beginning of a series of powerful and well-organised presentations of great French art. Nietzsche would have had historical evidences in support of his view of the war of 1870–71. For German art our victory was an unparalleled catastrophe. Munich has never again reached the level attained in 1869. The Secession improved the character of the exhibitions, not the pictures, and certainly succeeded in bringing together the average of what was good but never the highest excellence. It was not till thirty years after the glorious beginning made before the war that people (not in Munich but in Berlin) bethought themselves of the lesson of importation, and continued the progress which normally should have taken place in the seventies. The blind guides who have not learned this lesson and who talk nonsense about "Gallicism" may be silenced by the fact that the French have made us conscious of the existence of our own great men. They gave Leibl when he appeared among them the only encouragement he ever got, whereas at home he was rewarded with enmity and was placed below people of the seventh rank. When we began to understand their works it was they who opened our eyes to the similar qualities in the art of our own country. It is no accident that the National Gallery at Berlin, the only one of our galleries which possesses good examples of the French masters, also shelters a well-arranged collection of the best German pictures.

Trübner's career is a strong argument against the defective administration of the fine arts in Germany. This mismanagement does no apparent harm to genius; we have so much delight in the work it has given us that we forget to consider what it might have done. But it is disastrous to talent. Nothing can be more barbarous and stupid than the celebrated theory propounded by silly people that genius will triumph in spite of everything. Such persons console themselves by a belief in the indestructibility of talent, and imagine that genius, like the violet, will go on blooming in obscurity even though it be trampled upon by military boots. Nothing can be more unscientific than the science which denies the application of the idea of evolution to art, to art where all is evolution, and where one can say with absolute certainty that the man who really stands outside all sources of influence and produces from his own consciousness alone must infallibly produce what is worthless. "As if a man could get anything out of himself alone but stupidity and ineptitude!" said Goethe to the faithful Eckermann a year before his death.

The artistic prodigy who plays truant in order to paint the flowers of the heath as they appear to his childish eyes will remain a bungler all his life if he does not see the mighty masterpieces of art. He needs not only his handicraft which

* The exhibition included fine pictures by Ingres (the *Dante*, and various studies of heads and drawings), several good Delacroix (*Numa Pompilius and Egeria*, *Chiron and Achilles*, and a *Sibyl*), several Corots, among them *St. Sebastian*, a Millet, many fine Diaz, two landscapes by Daubigny, good examples of Decamps, Troyon, and Ribot, and, above all, a large collection of Courbets, among them *The Stonebreakers*. Manet, who was the only representative of the generation of 1870, had two early pictures, the *Danseur Espagnol* and the *Philosophe*. A melancholy episode by Israels represented Millet's circle.

he must learn like any craftsman (any conscientious guildsman can teach him that), he needs also to know the art, and the greatest art, of his contemporaries if he is to comprehend what his instinct will tell him is the way of artistic salvation when his powers reach their physical maturity. If, and only if, he then finds himself possessed of knowledge strong enough to bring his intellect into harmony with his special creative gift, and to divine the artistic needs of his age, the realisation of his talent will be complete. It will hardly be denied that the Batignolles school was sound in that it chose methods rationally adapted to the needs of the time and chose them not so much with the object of profiting individuals as of imparting to painting as a whole a tendency which, for good or for evil, was inevitable. And yet this collective work was done by individuals whose diversities no one can mistake. Doubtless had they been separated from one another and lived in different surroundings they would each have developed quite differently. Doubtless also they would even so have accomplished great things, but it is certain that they would not have achieved the high distinction of carrying out an indispensable artistic work, whose results have become a controlling influence in European art and have settled questions which belong, not to painting alone but to culture as a whole. So long as German artists are placed in the position of Leibl and Trübner, Feuerbach and Marées, we shall have interesting biographies to read, but we shall always be wearied in the end by the recurrence of the same depressing story. The story of German art can only become a history of culture when it becomes possible to speak less of individuals and more of the community.

Our more prominent living artists profited in their early days only by the old masters in our museums. Trübner and Liebermann are two illustrations of this fact. At a point which is easy to divine both had to go through a crisis which cost them many of the best years of their lives. Frenchmen of the same eminence reached stages of development at which they paused for a quiet survey and then proceeded at their ease to further triumphs. The Germans at analogous moments in their careers passed through catastrophes in which they had to struggle for their lives and in which energy, intelligence and coolness were more necessary than artistic talent; had they miscarried their ruin could scarcely have been ascribed to want of genius.

Trübner's instinct brought him nearer to Ter Borch than to any other artist. The pictures of 1872 suggest a Ter Borch approximating to Frans Hals, and cognisant of the profounder insight of Velazquez. Thus there is no trace of the exquisite silky colour of the painter of the *Concerts*, nothing of the piquant elegance of the gallant episodes, in which the greatest of the Dutch novellisti sets his blonde ladies in their white and yellow draperies, nothing of Ter Borch's sublime drollery. Trübner is much more actual, and his relationship is closest with the Ter Borch who painted simpler things, such as the picture, now at Munich, of the young man picking the fleas out of his dog's coat.

Trübner's early picture, painted in 1872, and now in the Stuttgart Gallery, is of this episodic order. A reddish brown cabinet stands before a very dark dull olive background. A young man holding a bottle cowers behind the open door. The picture is very sombre, almost colourless, yet extraordinarily effective. It has the sure organisation of the Dutchmen and a sobriety which, since it presents no more than the artist saw, has absolutely nothing of the quality of popular German genre painting to which the nature of the subject might have tempted the painter. This is the case with all Trübner's work; perhaps he could not help

himself. It sometimes seems as if he deliberately chose to paint a curious subject with the intention of producing a cheap effect upon the public. His titles are often most suspicious ; but he always put so much art into the picture that one can see nothing else. It is by no means easy for an artist of talent to paint bad pictures.

The advance on the Stuttgart picture which is visible in the *Studio* in the Pinakothek is so great that their almost simultaneous production is difficult to explain. The colour is of an unexampled delicacy and shows that he must have made the acquaintance of Velazquez without forgetting the opulence of the Dutch. The dress of the seated lady is of a shade that is hard to define—a sort of coffee colour shot with rose, which makes a delightfully subtle contrast with the greenish red of the patterned covering of the cushions, a new variety of the celebrated carpets of the Dutch school. The tone of the hair develops very charmingly out of the colour of the dress and the face-tints make a perfect transition. The composition is brilliant. The piquant action of the man who is leaning on the back of the chair is something not often seen in German art. It is elegant in the best sense and almost reminds us of certain Englishmen who had Van Dyck for their master.

The *Moor reading a newspaper* also belongs to this group of pictures. It was painted at Rome in 1873 and now hangs in the Städel Institute. It is an arrangement in blue-green and coffee colour of great harmony and refinement. The blue-green predominates so much—the sofa differs only in texture from the tone of the wall—that the Moor himself, who is most carefully painted in great detail, has the effect of a cunningly placed patch of colour, and is an admirably organised passage in the picture, akin in effect to the yellow gloves lying beside him. Perhaps the hat with its band of red leather, so happily introduced in the later portrait in the National Gallery, might have been dispensed with here. The red is a little incongruous among these quiet tones.

Even before the *Studio* Trübner had painted that little gem now in the Berlin National Gallery, the *Young Girl on the Sofa*. In this picture he combines what is best in himself with what is best in Leibl. It is the freshest Trübner of the seventies, and the richest in colour. The Dutch influence is still obvious, but, as in the transmutation of Rubens and Frans Hals which Hogarth effected when he painted the *Shrimp Girl*, it is dominated by a new temperament. All the details of the room are admirable, the blue-gray pattern of the wall-paper, the flowered chintz of the sofa, the quality of the table-cover with its red squares on which stand the blooming flowers. The girl herself recalls Leibl in his best days, but she is more vivid ; the black and white is richer ; it almost suggests Manet. Trübner modelled only at the beginning of his career, Leibl's tendency to draughtsmanship took no permanent hold on him. The consequence is that of the two he is the more animated. There is always more air in his pictures than in Leibl's. One divines the landscape painter even when he paints interiors.

The *Girl on the Sofa* opens the series of fine female portraits into which Trübner put the best of his art. Here there is no more Ter Borch, nor of the clever art of pleasing superficialities. He succeeds in adapting his mastery of colour to strong and highly individual powers of expression. Velazquez had previously taught him how to handle the charm of colour objectively, he was now to become his model in a narrower sense and to teach him how to give his subjects that grand air which creates types out of those characteristics of a model which have been most



TRÜBNER: THE GIRL ON THE SOFA (1872)
NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

happily seized. This development shows what a gifted man may learn even in cases where his own senses alone appear to be productive. In his portraits of women Trübner grasps the inner significance of Velazquez just as if he had worked beside the master in his studio, and at the same time he assimilated the essence of his art without any narrowness in a way only possible to a vision clarified by the lapse of centuries. In the *Lady in Gray* he comes nearest to the Spaniard, what keeps him apart is nationality and social conditions. Velazquez painted princesses and splendid courtiers, Trübner painted women of the German middle class. The two artists resemble each other only in essentials—the marvellous reticence of composition and colour, the monumental simplicity of their work. This is no blasphemy against Velazquez. Of course I suggest not a comparison of powers, but of methods. In Herr Weigand's fine portrait at Munich a trace of Frans Hals is mixed with the influence of the Spaniard. The anatomy of the face, the side glance which converges so brilliantly with the hat set aslant over the ear, is pure Hals ; but Trübner, in producing this effect, only added to the distinction of his picture.

Trübner's connection with the real Leibl school appears much more clearly in his portraits of men, and this is easy to understand. Leibl's peculiar technique was splendidly adapted for this kind of work. He carved, as it were, with his brush. Leibl's portrait of Pallenberg at Cologne and his Katheder portrait are Trübner's models. He painted his father's portrait in 1873 with a broad but short-cut brush exactly like Leibl's, so that there are many angles and edges which break up the colour at the right points. This rich effect, produced by modelling, replaced the colour of his earlier pictures and reduced the scale of his palette more and more. Even the portrait of his mother painted in the same year, the full face bust with the white ruffle and the chain round the neck, is painted in this way. Seen close at hand the head looks like a polyhedron with innumerable facets which are of course most prominent at the curve of the cheeks, and less conspicuous in the broad spaces of the forehead. The only important differences of colour are in the face, the dress and the background. In the fine head of the man with the red beard painted in 1876, now in the Ullmann collection at Frankfort, the colour is still relatively rich. The consummate skill with which the fur on the coat is painted reminds one of Van Eyck no less than the muff of the *Cocotte* in Leibl's picture. Trübner becomes quite black in the portrait of Schuch (1876), the masterpiece in the National Gallery. It is the best thing he ever did, and indeed one of the best of all German pictures, in which the deepest colour—the black which is so much out of favour nowadays—attains its greatest magnificence.

So far Trübner's development was as simple and logical as that of a Dutchman of the seventeenth century. He had worked hard and shown himself worthy to be received as master in his guild, and like his predecessors to produce one accomplished work after another in quiet succession.

It now appeared that the guild had ceased to exist. Leibl's circle quietly broke up having lost the cohesion given by the stimulus of sympathetic associates. The outer world never knew of this secret Golden Age of German painting.

These circumstances began to have their effect on Trübner also, as was natural. Everywhere he saw beginnings but no clear end in view. Moreover he did not fail to see how after Leibl's retirement the tendency of Böcklin and Thoma began to prevail. This had become familiar to him through Feuerbach and just because it was foreign to his nature this loyal disciple thought it his duty to master it.

Trübner's *Giants*, all of which as far as I know still remain in the painter's possession, enjoy the unconcealed contempt of all the amateurs of fantastic art. When he painted them he had the idea that even in such things artistic qualities were of importance and that when a man painted naked giants he would give satisfaction if he painted the nude as well as possible. The public did not mind so much that he treated the rules of composition somewhat cavalierly, as that he carefully avoided befogging people in the usual way and introducing elements into his picture other than those directly concerned with palette or brush or pencil. He was content to paint without poetising.

The inspiration of the *Battle of the Giants* did not come to him like a gift from heaven, but from a very beautiful Renaissance shield belonging to the collection of Prince Karl which was exhibited at the Glaspalast in Munich in 1876 in a section of the exhibition prettily entitled "The Works of our Forefathers," which had a special attraction for the son of a goldsmith. It now hangs in the Arsenal at Berlin. Trübner thought that the naïve joy which our ancestors expressed in this and many another shield was not unworthy to be transferred to canvas at the present day. His method differed from that of Feuerbach, whose *Battle of the Giants* was not exhibited at Munich until about two years after Trübner's picture was painted. Feuerbach was not thinking of shields but of great expanses of wall; yet in principle the point of departure for both painters was precisely similar, while the effect in each case is completely different from, say, that produced by Böcklin. Trübner painted these pictures much as he painted his landscapes, with a simplicity wonderful in a German. In the numerous nude figures he found welcome points of light; the variation of level and the many diversities of the bodies in the picture provide so many varieties of light charged with colour. And when all these elements are thoroughly shaken together as is usual in treating this subject, the result is a remarkable play of high and low tones which imparts a great vivacity to the surfaces.

It requires no great acuteness to perceive that these elements are not quite all that is necessary to the production of a work of art of this kind. The idea which reduces chaos to order and gives depth to the painter's treatment is an indispensable addition, and it is further necessary that his composition should be in harmony with certain traditions. A man's life is too short for him to pass through all the accumulated experience of the past in his own person. Trübner's genius was more akin to the Dutchmen than to Rubens, and valuable as this short phase of his art may seem (its very weaknesses are signs of health), we may congratulate ourselves and him that he soon returned to subjects in which the scheme of light and colour was less complicated.

The days of struggle were not over, in fact they only began when Trübner left the *Giants*, which had for a time concealed from him the real nature of the problem. As a portrait painter he had discovered that the seductions of black led to narrowness in a painter of the nineteenth century. He realised that it was necessary even in painting to give full play to the highly developed scientific impulse of our time. The Chinese Wall which his associates built round themselves in the eighties, and which at best did not shut off the view of many unprofitable things, and the want of all relations with the Paris of Monet and Pissarro where the answer to all the questions of the lonely Germans had long since been found, cost Trübner many years. He always looked to Munich for new inspiration; and fortified as he was against the Scotch dishes which the exhibitions there began to serve in such

profusion, he could not guess that, fortunately, the future held other possibilities. At last a new movement was improvised by Liebermann from Berlin. The enormous advance which France had again made, and to which the Germans had come so near at one time, became at once apparent, and Trübner as well as others reaped a belated harvest. The later Trübner, who paints the luminous, finely-toned landscapes, who has renewed the brilliant technique of his youth, the painter of the splendid pictures of horses and the strong portraits is, as he always was, one of our greatest artists. The days of aberration which we find in the history of his copious production correspond to an interregnum in German art as a whole. He himself was in no greater danger than was the whole of our painting in the ten years of drift. But while many another fatally compromised himself, Trübner always gave us sincere documents that testify to his great abilities.

Amateurs to this day prefer the Trübners of the seventies, which also yielded the fruits most prized by lovers of Leibl and Liebermann.* It may be expected that in time, as the new century advances, Liebermann as well as Trübner will go up in value. This will greatly benefit not only the dealers but also modern German art.

Trübner is now working as a professor at Carlsruhe and it is to be hoped that the rising generation will attend to his instructions. For he can tell them from his own experience what a great German of the eighteenth century wrote: "If you

* I give a list below of some of the chief pictures of the first period. Those to which no owner's name is attached are for the most part in the the artist's possession.

1870–71. *In Church* (Carlsruhe Gallery).
The Coin Collector (Oberrheinische Bank, Heidelberg).
1872. *The Youth in the Cupboard* (Stuttgart Gallery).
Girl on the Sofa (Berlin National Gallery).
In the Studio (Pinakothek, Munich).
1872–73. *Portrait of the Artist's Father.*
Portrait of the Artist's Mother.
Portrait of Himself at Table (painted at Rome, owner Herr Heubach, Heidelberg).
1873. *Moor Reading the Newspaper* (painted at Rome, Städel Institute, Frankfort).
Negro with an Empty Purse (painted at Rome).
Negro with Peonies (painted at Rome).
In the Castle of Heidelberg (Darmstadt Gallery).
1874. Variants of *Christ in the Tomb* (painted in spring at Brussels).
1874. Various landscapes, among which are the one in the Berlin National Gallery and the one in the Pinakothek at Munich. Painted in summer at Herreninsel.
1875. *Portrait of Himself as a Soldier.*
1876. *Portrait of the Man with the Red Beard in Furs* (Herr Ullmann, Frankfort).
Blonde lady with Furs and Hat.
Old Woman with both Hands showing.
Portrait of a Lady showing one Hand (Herr W. Weigand, Munich).
Lady in Gray.
Portrait of Schuch (Berlin National Gallery).
1876–77. *The Battle of the Giants.*
1877. *Battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs.*
1878. *Crucifixion.*
Hunting Scene.
Cæsar at the Rubicon (a dog looking at sausage on a table) (Carlsruhe Gallery).
Zimmermannsplatz (Kunsthalle, Hamburg).
1879. *Dante's Inferno.*
1880. *Tilly.*
1881. *Battle of Ampfing.*
Battle of Wimpfen.
1882. *Parade of the Munich Guard.*

have an earnest purpose of doing or producing something which shall bear the stamp of honesty and thoroughness, so that when complete it is the true image of your inmost soul, any makeshift method, any want of understanding of the material will be as much against that purpose as a lie is against truth. If there are words that you do not understand and with which you wish to say something which they do not express, it is not only better that they should be left unsaid, but it is a great misfortune that they should be said even under compulsion." *

* " Literary Remains of Philipp Otto Runge," published by his eldest brother. (Hamburg, Perthes, 1840.)



L. V. HOFMANN. DRAWING FROM " PAN."



MAX LIEBERMANN: HOME FOR OLD MEN IN AMSTERDAM (1880)



MAX LIEBERMANN: COURTYARD OF THE ORPHANAGE IN AMSTERDAM (1881)
STÄDEL INSTITUTE, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

LIEBERMANN AND HIS CIRCLE

LIEBERMANN is connected with the school of Leibl through Munkacsy, with whom he was associated much as was Manet with Stevens. His relations with the Hungarian were closer, however, than those of the Frenchman with the Belgian. The difference between Manet and Stevens was essentially greater, if only because they belonged to different races. The Hungarian Jew and the Berlin Jew were nearer to each other. They had a community of methods and expression, but happily, as in the case of the other pair, no community of taste. Liebermann emerged from Leibl's sphere of influence and re-acted upon it. Munkacsy's *Lint-makers*, Liebermann's first work, the *Goose-pluckers*, and Hirth du Frênes' *Hop-pickers*, which appeared six years later, form a series. Uhde's *Concert* may be added to the number. The influence exercised by Liebermann in his later days continues the history of German painting down to the present time.

We traced the revival of painting in Germany to the exhibition of the Frenchmen in Munich in 1869, and found that the halt in its development was due to the break in our relations with French art almost as soon as they were formed. At this time Liebermann was at Weimar, Genelli's town, and was a student in Thumann's studio—a raven in the dovecote. The youth from Berlin had not a spark of comprehension for things which he could not see and count on his fingers. He came from a Berlin that was preparing to play a part, and was also beginning to lay aside its accustomed respect for the past. His development, like that of his native town, was astonishingly logical and startlingly rapid. It was a development which was thoroughly unpopular with the old leaven that wished to reckon, not with art in Germany, but with German art ; and it sought on its own responsibility and found what was needful.

The teachers to whom he went were foreign ; first, the very school in which Feuerbach had studied, the colour of Wappers which had been brought to Weimar by Pauwels, the pupil of the Belgian ; then Paris.

Liebermann was more practical than Trübner, who set out to establish the glory of German painting at the same time as he, but in another direction. Trübner, with the thoroughness of his race, wished to assimilate all art from the Middle Ages down to his own day, and perhaps he overlooked the possibility that he might not have time to carry out this programme. In 1873, the year in which Trübner went to Rome, Liebermann went to Paris. Trübner's typically German countenance would scarcely have been welcomed on the banks of the Seine two years after the end of the war.

In taking this step Liebermann began by casting off what he did not want. When we study his work, notably of his first period, memories of the old masters are not absent, but there is nothing to challenge comparisons. Its obvious inspiration was the achievement of the Millet-Courbet generation, who were just finishing their day's work when Liebermann came to Paris. He followed them more closely than any of the Germans.

Liebermann, however, was a German, and a German of the school of Leibl, inasmuch as what he looked for in the first instance among the Frenchmen was shadow. Manet, though so near, was if possible more completely a stranger to him than to his colleague Trübner, who knew of the *Olympia* quite early. This Spanish manner may at first merely have disturbed him, and there is no reason to regret his delayed knowledge. It made it possible for him to develop the art neglected at that time even in France, of which Millet and Courbet were both exponents, and to find the form most suited to the type of his creative genius. To this Manet added a further attribute, which was well controlled.

The use Liebermann made of Courbet was a different matter to the study which the true Leibl circle had bestowed on the Frenchman. They had tried to beautify realism by treating it in the manner of the old masters ; they looked to him only for an objective stimulus. Liebermann, on the contrary, was seeking for an organic form for his talent.

The consistency with which he pursued this object all his life is reflected in all his pictures. It was some time before this constant effort produced the Liebermann whom, in the presence of his great achievement, we revere to-day, yet it is extraordinarily strong even in his first pictures. It is the racial instinct for organisation. In Leibl's circle this same tendency was present but it concentrated itself on fragmentary painting, and in the case of the head of the school it led to those bewildering complexities the ramifications of which I have tried to indicate. Liebermann's instinct drives him to deal with larger surfaces, and in this he follows the natural endeavours of all modern art.

Only one of his pictures (representing, I think, an engraver in his studio and painted before the *Goose-pluckers*) is detail painting in the manner of the school of Wappers ; it gives things that have nothing to do with the picture. In the *Goose-pluckers* he gets his first grasp of form. Following the old proverb which he had made his own, he had only to leave out of the picture all that was unessential in order to realise his art. Liebermann is the painter of energy. He has the virtue which characterises his compatriots in the narrower sense ; the charm that he exercises is above all things the charm of energy. Superb early sketches by him are extant, the *Preserve-makers* in the Leipzig Museum, the sketch for the *Infant School* which lately appeared in Paris and so forth : they suggest the palette of Ribot suddenly possessed by a devil. In these sketches and such as these, the same Ribot, of whom Leibl faintly reminds us, has acquired a stronger temperament. In the finished picture this impetuous technique was often smoothed down and Liebermann's pictures always suffered more than Leibl's by such translation. Leibl could always paint a finished picture. Liebermann had to finish his in the sketch. How should he have acquired a taste for leisurely work ? If, after the first draft, Leibl paused to reflect, he thought of Holbein. Liebermann thought of himself ! It was he therefore who ran the risk of being trivial.

He overcame this danger by methods of his own. Modern as he is, he did not shut his eyes to the necessity of finding a schema that would enable him to give expression to what was in him. He sought a method of separating from the myriads of phenomena a group of tasks which would be suited to his genius and which would enable him to proceed from smaller to greater achievements.

For a nature so concrete, which regarded all fancy as a mere makeshift, this

schema could not be literary in character. The world of sensation which Millet called into being meant almost nothing to Liebermann. Millet affected him always by his details, never by his synthesis ; the anatomy of his painting was helpful to the German, not its character.

Emil Heilbut, the first biographer of Liebermann, goes to the root of the matter in his study of *Germinal*. He reminds us how Etienne and Suwarin met by the canal and observes :—" When Zola attributed to these two a taste for simple landscape of this kind he premised a common attitude of mind in those whose natures are most clearly stamped with the essential characteristics of the new age. Socialists and Nihilists like Etienne and Suwarin have a fondness for the flattest landscape, whose straight lines are very far from giving any sensual pleasure, and this feeling has been expressed in art by a group of painters extremely modern in their views, who are important rather owing to their character than to their number. Their sensibility is charmed by the monotony of plains with low, isolated houses and cowering figures that hardly stand out against the landscape, in which the puddles seem to soil the light of day as they reflect it, and the ribbon of road that cuts through it loses itself in distance and darkness, mournful, vague, hopeless and endless.

" These artists have kept themselves far from the dwellings of the rich, far from their ideas and their comfort. They make their work impossible for the walls of rich amateurs. Yet it seems that the rich themselves are giving way and adopting the new fashion, adapting themselves to the ugly, dismal colour, though hitherto they could suffer only pleasant and pretty things.

" But the question is, What is there in common between the Etiennes and the Suwarins and these artists of the new epoch ? The feeling for Nature of hopeless mortals seeking solace has taken possession of them. They are unable to endure the godlessness of their age which they have so sharply formulated and so clearly understood, and which they represent by their intellects. They are weighed down by a nostalgia for an earlier time, the golden age in which all things were simple and childlike. An immense sadness has fallen on them like a burden. They are the enthusiastic partisans of the poor and the suffering just as if these were better than the rest of the world, and as the poor are more paintable in their rags they find in them something that is almost a consolation for the gods that they have lost. Through all their modernity runs an anachronism ; they are in fact the mystics of our century. They find their inspiration in the lowliest corner, in the smallest matters. They are intoxicated with creation ; they are drunk with adoration of Nature, the mighty mother, in her simplest manifestations. There is something immature in their impulses and they have no clear consciousness of themselves ; it is a kind of prescience in which as yet they can only feel . . ." *

It is twenty years since these lines were written. The feeling they express crystallised into a theory, and as the group of artists in question grew in numbers and declined in importance people learned more and more to appreciate Liebermann's individuality.

First his shadows, then his high lights startled the eyes of both his friends and his enemies in Germany, much as Manet's plein air had startled Frenchmen before 1870. This was a good thing so far as it went, as it suggested something beyond the eternal question of the Beautiful and the Ugly. This change helped to

* " Max Liebermann and Naturalism," by Herman Helfreich, *Kunst für Alle, II.* 14 and 15 (April 15 and May 1, 1887). See also an article by the same author in the same journal *XII.* 15 (May 1, 1897).

spread a knowledge of physiology and thus tended to deliver artistic judgment from the unspeakable follies of the moralist connoisseur.

Since then people have acquired some sense of proportion, and in Liebermann's case as in Manet's, the question of light and shade has become, not indeed a matter of indifference, but one of secondary importance. This involves no innovation in the rules of art; it only shows more practically and more decisively than was shown by his immediate predecessors how eternal these rules are.

Liebermann's system, if we may so describe the relation to Nature which he sought to subordinate to his purpose, was a spatial system. It is clearly traceable in all his early pictures, and at first it is even the criterion of value of many of his works. That is to say, that the pictures wherein we see it seem better inspired than others in which we find less concrete methods and which seem to possess less artistic unity. It is otherwise with his later pictures, where the artist has learned to work without any obvious recourse to a system and where outward movement has become inward meaning and style a part of his being.

The system seems to act as a sort of channel for the sources of light with which the artist was accustomed to work. This effect is very marked in the fine pictures, painted about 1880, which were brought to Berlin a few years ago from the Faure and Maître collections. Liebermann was fond of shady alleys, as in the case of the *Old Men's Almshouse* or the *Courtyard of the Orphanage at Amsterdam*, where the sun falls through the foliage on a row of old men or girls. He was aiming at a similar effect in his school pictures, where he paints a crowd of children, and in his *Preserve-makers*, where he paints a company of girls in an interior. In the *Flax Shed* in the National Gallery the system is carried to its extreme limits. On the benches under the four windows of the long room the children sit at work presenting an arabesque of innumerable backs and heads. The threads of flax run like rays of sunlight into the room from the window, parallel with the beams of the roof, and are held by the women who animate the foreground.

All these men, women, girls and children in the various pictures are as it were receptacles for light and colour, arranged so as to collect and distribute the splendour in an agreeable manner. The light comes to them through gaps in the foliage, from the door, from the windows; and they for their part supply the tones and colours from which arise the effects of the light upon their clothes, their hands, and their faces. Liebermann's naturalism consists in using this contrivance only for the natural purpose of the picture, and in the fact that he does not attempt to juggle with these simple materials.

Now Menzel is a naturalist. Heilbut very acutely calls him a mannerist, because he seeks his methods in Nature, not in himself, and because he does not achieve the synthesis which Liebermann's manner does achieve. Liebl himself did a few things of the Menzel type and they were among his least successful ventures. Menzel represents Chaos; he depends on the chance that the excerpt from Nature with which he intends to present us has been happily selected. He is like realistic novelists who try to make their characters individual by peculiarity of diction or similar tricks. His works are studies from memory, good in favourable circumstances, for he can both draw and paint; satisfying, even, if he is lucky and Nature happens to suit him. Liebermann happened to suit Nature and that is just the difference.

Liebermann's energy, which I have praised so highly, and which so often makes Menzel appear lukewarm in comparison, is not a moral but as it were a caloric



MAX LIEBERMANN: PILOTS (1874)
ARNOLD'S GALLERY, DRESDEN



MAX LIEBERMANN: HORSEMEN BY THE SEA

FRIEDMANN COLLECTION, BERLIN

energy. As he props himself on no spiritual crutches people have called him unintellectual and have wondered at his cleverness. It was a deliverance for Germany when a technical way was found out of her difficulties through technique alone. But this sort of energy is as spiritual as any other, and in art as in life it involves a struggle with Nature against Nature.

In Liebermann's case the spectacle of this struggle has its charm. He had his method from the first; it was as primitive as that of the old pictures of the saints. He gradually reduced the number of details and eliminated the many in order to strengthen the one. He followed the rule of economising his strength as far as possible and at last achieved the vigorous type of his art which contains all the expression of his groups in a few rugged lines.

Muther,* so far as I know, was the first to give any idea of Liebermann's monumental quality. He rated his conception more highly than his technique, which was right, and he spoke of the confusion of Menzel and of the sobriety of Liebermann's surfaces. More recently an artist of the modern decorative school, Schultze-Naumburg, has carefully analysed this quality and by a consideration of the character of the action represented by the artist, he arrives at an appreciation of his greatness as the exponent of a monumental art. † This seems to go to the root of the matter. Liebermann is above all things a monumental artist.

Our perverse age has accustomed us to compromises; we use the names of past ages to distinguish tendencies the direction of which we divine, even when the concrete object which gave definiteness to the aims of the old masters has disappeared. Thus we have monumental artists but no monuments. When Liebermann painted his *Woman with the Goats* or the peasants striding over the dunes, he was not thinking of the great wall which would have been the fitting surface for these mighty things, and when on a later occasion he did get one commission to decorate a hall it was much the same to him as if he had been asked to paint an ordinary picture. In Rosenhagen's exhaustive biography,‡ in which, among other things, these remarkable Mühlenburg decorations are reproduced, it is said that Millet, Segantini and Liebermann fell short of what they might have done because they had no opportunity of practising monumental decoration. This does not sound convincing. It is even absurd in the case of Segantini, who had great difficulty in filling his spaces properly even in his pictures and who never managed to retain the charm of his little drawings in these. It is certainly not true of Millet; one might as well wish that Rembrandt had painted frescoes. It is mere heresy to assert that Millet, in whom so divine a harmony reigns, could have brought it to a higher perfection in another form. It seems impossible that that little gem in the Louvre—the mother and her child—could be stronger or more effective if the art which inspires it had expressed itself on a whole wall. Art only begins when such trifles as questions of format are ruled out.

No monumental art is possible without a background; the mind of a multitude must be expressed in the individual. The multitude behind Liebermann is the new Berlin, of which he is the symbol. This has at first sight as little to do with his painting as the fact that he talks Berlin slang, and yet it is the most striking feature of his work. It is not the character of Holland that he paints—what interest have we in the soul of Holland!—but Berlin, Berlin which as yet has no

* "Geschichte der Malerei im XIXten Jahrhundert," vol. iii. p. 421.
† "Neues von Max Liebermann," "Kunst für Alle," XVI. 7 (January 1901).
‡ "Liebermann," Hans von Rosenhagen ("Kunstlermonographien," Velhagen und Klasing, 1900).

traditions, which with its Emperor, its soldiers, and the motley bourgeoisie drawn from every state in the empire, seems an amorphous body and yet has mighty aspirations. It is sustained by nothing but its energy, a wild life force that cannot be put down and is now beginning to seek a language for itself.

Liebermann presages the future aspects of this body. He renders the charm of Berlin which is already dimly divined, the pleasing side of a sincerity which some day will be expressed without impudence and even with grace. A Parisian in good society speaks to-day as his forefathers spoke just before the Revolution when the most threatening symptoms of disorder were admired as intellectual originality. His blague is the same as the clever and charming unpracticality of the people who took care not to get dirty when they laid their powdered heads and pigtails under the guillotine. Liebermann represents a more serious, a less charming and a less frivolous people who have something better to do with their heads. Their style is far from the sentimentality of the days of good Queen Luise whose generation would be horrified at our present desert of ugliness, which is so excessive that it continues to surprise Paris and Vienna. But we have done the only thing possible ; we have organised our ugliness, and if it does not delight the rest of mankind it begins to impress them.

Liebermann is typical of this beauté de diable of Berlin. The beauty of his work is hygienic in a sense ; it is quite unscented, like the soap so much used by the Berlin folks. It is not only cleanly, it is clean, noble and solid throughout—a cold beauty, to possess which is as much a necessity of intellectual health as a matter of inclination.

In this sort of form draughtsmanship plays the principal part. Liebermann's development, like that of others, displays the peculiar German evolution from colour to line. His energy seems to throw off its envelope of colour as the years go by ; his style is bare, far from Millet's atmosphere, which was coloured by Pissarro, but far also from the sauce of his beloved Israels. Yet the effect of his work is never poor ; there is something of modern comfort in Liebermann ; there is no gold, no jewellery, no pomp, but he has the conciseness of contemporary elegance. In the *Boys bathing*, of 1897, now at Frankfort, this characteristic is strongly marked. There is a strict simplicity of colour ; the lines are straight ; there is a touch of coldness in the atmosphere, in the subject, and in the feeling of the picture. One is very far from the *Baigneuses* of the Frenchmen who cannot imagine any one but a woman bathing. In Germany the male form tempts the artist. It lends itself to drawing not to colour ; it is a sinewy form which makes one think not of love but of the gymnasium ; the bones are sound and there is but little fat. In Liebermann's pictures it becomes more and more austere. Compare with these nude studies of youths the early picture *Brother and Sister*, from which Kœpping made his fine engraving, the girl with the child on her arm. Israels' influence is clear—a feeble edition of Rembrandt. Since then Liebermann has thrown a good deal of ballast overboard, and with it all that remained of the sentimentality that in the seventies still threatened him at times.

Even without sentiment it is possible to show much wit, not merely on a great and monumental scale, but in an intimate and amusing manner—Liebermann is one of the best of artist-humorists. Nothing can be more charming than his pig pictures, especially the one at Wiesbaden in which the young litter is rushing greedily into the trough while the old sow lumbers up grunting heavily. There is a squeal of delight in this picture. The pen-and-ink study,

here reproduced, although it deals with swine, seems to me as elegant in its fine lines as the studies for his portraits of ladies.

As is almost natural in a Berliner, Liebermann is cosmopolitan. His style came from Leibl, a draughtsman, but he adopted everything that he found needful elsewhere. As a young man he learnt his art at Barbizon, and his development gradually completed itself, running parallel with the most characteristic currents in the artistic life of Paris. He could not introduce Monet's Impressionism with all its consequences into Berlin. That would have been abnormal. An art, successful as this was, which staked everything on colour, was at the time impossible in Germany. The pure colour of that school was not to be transplanted, nor were the decorative idea of Manet and the consequent teaching of Monet. The streets of Berlin cannot be set with trees to flourish after the fashion of Paris. Liebermann observed and learned to love these men, but the Parisian draughtsmen were more useful to him. Degas was his affinity.

In his brilliant study * Liebermann places Degas highest among the Frenchmen. His enthusiasm is not only that of one extolling a pioneer in his own paths. There are whole worlds in Degas which Liebermann could not enter, the privileges of his race, the classic feeling, the reminiscence of Ingres. He is the most abrupt of the Frenchmen ; his lines are the straightest among their arabesques, and yet how voluptuous are his women compared with Liebermann's sobriety ! It was Degas' taste, his choicest gift, that the German sought to rival. He could find no more exalted model. Whether he attains it is almost entirely a matter of taste too. He seems to me to have reached the same eminence in Germany as Degas in France. If we set an ideal Germany (the realisation of our presentiments of the future taste) over against an ideal France (the actual exquisite French taste which is the inheritance of the past) so that the best qualities of the two races are opposed to each other, we shall find that, when he is compared with the foreigner, the Jew in Liebermann is lost in the German.

Liebermann could not reach these heights by a direct approximation to Degas ; the more he came to resemble him the further he would have departed from him. He went to the sources which Degas used, so to speak, experimentally, to the foreigners with whom even Degas had nothing racial in common, to Japan. It might be possible to show that certain qualities in Liebermann grew finer in proportion as his Japanese collection improved. For Degas the Japanese were models. He did what he liked with them ; they enhanced his qualities, made his works greater, more fluent, more decorative. Japan had been the property of Parisian artists since Rousseau in the sixties used to sell his pictures for a mere song in order to buy Japanese things. Degas, too, was among the first who sought them out, and he knew how to reproduce the result in a natural manner. Liebermann learned a deeper vision from them. Japan helped him to build up more freely the system of which I spoke at the beginning and made him a European instead of a Dutchman.

This addition differentiates Liebermann in the most piquant manner from the school of Leibl. Leibl had power, never wit. Menzel's wit is of another kind, which does not consist in having a supple wrist like the Japanese and the fortunate Europeans who have learned in their school. It is only possible to appreciate Liebermann's wit when one has given up liking Menzel's.

The Liebermann of the equine pictures was the product of a remarkable training.

* Published by B. Cassirer, Berlin, previously in " Pan " IV.

The effect of his art is like the movement of a blood horse which knows not effort and answers to the slightest pressure of the knee. Liebermann has always performed what he promised. His earlier pictures are a trifle empty at times; his principles led him to avoid anything like profusion. The monumental vein in him inclined to austerity. He required to be older in order to reach his final aim.

The value of this aim seems to me to lie in the unique success he attained without sacrificing what he had gained already. There is no weak line pointing to compromise in the whole picture of this man's life. The maturity of his best days which we are now witnessing is the full realisation of his powers; the astonishing sense of proportion in the drawing which sustains the colour, in the colour itself, in the whole and in every detail, is the expression of a complete theory which had the good fortune as it had the will and the power to develop in harmony with a happy instinct. Liebermann seems to me to be one of the few men who have every reason to be satisfied with fate. It was certainly a most fortunate concatenation of circumstances that enabled him to climb so high. He was lucky in happening on the right time and place, lucky also in being able to satisfy all the necessities of his creative instinct. This good fortune makes him all the more acceptable in this age in which the fighters are so many and the conquerors so few. There is none of the pessimism in his pictures that old-fashioned people used to see in them. They are splendid evidences of an unconquerable belief in health.

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The characteristics of Liebermann's associates do not belong to the consideration of art in the narrower sense. Their history, like a great part of Liebermann's, comes under the heading of German culture, which deals less with personalities than with ideas. Details in the case of the lesser people are not important here, where we are dealing only with a few great men. Uhde, Liebermann's intimate friend, has not justified his early promise or fulfilled the hopes which Heilbut expressed in his first well-known study of Naturalism. Ten years after this was written the critics, with Heilbut at their head, altered the order of merit and placed Liebermann before Uhde. In another ten years it is possible that the interval between the two will be increased.

Uhde's fate may be described as the contrary of Liebermann's as I have just described it. He never had any luck, even though worldly success came sooner to him than to his colleague. All the circumstances which combined to favour Liebermann, and among them the fact that success did not come so quickly, were against Uhde. The most decisive of all was that which no one can alter: the inborn capacity—the racial factor. When all is said and done, all artistic evolution is as it were a process of sloughing off old skin. There must be the right sort of friction from without to make the scales fall, but there must also be a strong impulse from within in order to burst one old skin after another.

Uhde changed his skin frequently, but there was no natural inward necessity about the process; it was always a mere change of costume. Nothing injures delicate organs so much as capricious external tampering with them. It is hardly to be supposed that he did it in mere wantonness; the disquiet of the time was to blame, perhaps also the want of a proper environment. The ex-Saxon officer could never be so much at home at Munich as Liebermann was among his



FRANS HALS: PORTRAIT OF JEAN HONEBEEK
BRUSSELS MUSEUM

Berlin friends. It must never be forgotten what a help this consciousness of being at home was to the latter, even when people provoked him. Uhde lacked alike the system and the cool malice of Liebermann. He could not hold out long enough to overcome a superficial impression. Frans Hals helped him to get clear of Munkacsy, who had been of much service to him, but neither the one nor the other gave him the plastic quality of a solid form which he could make his own.

The importance of Frans Hals to the generation of 1870 can hardly be exaggerated. Each of these artists who are his debtors is characterised by what he owes to him. Manet drew most largely upon him; the Dutchman was as indispensable to Manet as Goya. There is a surprising resemblance between Manet's best male portraits and the *Jean Honebeek* at Brussels, the young fisherman in the Antwerp Museum, and other works of the first class in which Hals attains the height of his quiet majesty and paints flesh in his best manner without lacerating it. Perhaps Manet found this art with its brilliant black, its glittering white and its vigorous brushing, even more helpful than the work of the Madrid masters. Courbet on the other hand preferred the other and more popular sides of the Dutchman, the *Hille Bobbe* which he copied at Aix.* Uhde also copied it, but the laughing faces in the Schwerin collection and the pleased grin of the mandoline players in the Rijksmuseum suited him even better. In spite of his great admiration for Hals, Leibl remained free from his influence; indeed one of the most important differences between him and his school is the adoption of Frans Hals by the latter. Trübner, strong in his own technique, began by reducing his model, and retained in his own work only so much of Hals' impetuosity as his colour could control. It was only in his latest period, for instance in the equestrian portrait here reproduced, that he uses the great brush-strokes of Frans Hals, and even then he orders them much more strictly than his master. Liebermann, also, in his travels in Holland was not unaffected. In 1875 he had already copied the *Bohémienne* in the Louvre; in the next few years he painted a few of the figures from the great guild pictures at Haarlem, the latest in 1884, and he often planned to paint the child with the nurse of the picture in the Berlin Museum. Frans Hals was the only master he ever copied. The audacious play of his model's brush hardened his drawing, but the traces of the Dutch master are barely perceptible, and the influence of Hals seems to become fainter year by year, or rather to be more absorbed among the other elements of his character. Uhde, however, lacked this capacity for absorption. In him Frans Hals' impetuosity becomes a bald sobriety. The sense that can perceive only gesture loses itself in emptiness. Uhde's art is purely intellectual; characteristic in so far as it has nothing to do with painting, it is utterly wanting in character to those who demand a strong creative impulse. Even the religious element does not help him out. The much talked of new ideal of Christ which is ascribed to Uhde is as completely superficial as many a mannered picture by the godless Hals, though it lacks his incisive bravura.

Other Germans are threatened with another danger; they are becoming specialists. In so doing they seem at first sight to be following the same course as so many of their contemporaries in Paris, who are active in a narrow field; but their method, earnest as it is, is less interesting than the specialisms which flourish by the Seine. Pissarro, Guillaumin, and their associates helped forward the movement by single steps; they prepared things which others carried further, and they perfected in their way what they had taken up. It was a case of division of

* Courbet's copy is now in the Cheramy collection, and is almost finer than the original at Berlin.

labour. In Germany it is more a division of the material. The individualisation is always superficial. There are many brilliant successes such as Banzer's *Dancing Peasants*, Kalckreuth's *Toy Theatre*, Kühl's fine Elbe pictures. Liebermann's sure average, his power of finding a reasonable norm for his temperament, is given to very few of our artists. What we still lack, much as it has been talked about, is a concerted movement. How disciplined was the fight made by the French Impressionists ! There each little problem finds some one whose work, in the great combined whole, is to find its solution. Think of Monet's hundred landscapes, of Cézanne's innumerable studies of still life, of Sisley's repetitions. These people form a school ; their invention begins where German invention leaves off. This was the way in which the old masters understood actuality. Of course repetition alone is useless. Leibl, Trübner, and Liebermann are models, the first for perseverance, the second for courage, the third for judgment in choosing his task. The third contains the other two. There is no better type of mastery in the sense in which the word is used to-day than Liebermann. His defects are known to everybody ; he proclaims them himself. If he seems one-sided so much the better ! This kind of narrowness which falls back upon the best things is not an evil. I consider the aversion to symbolism which he used sometimes to express in a very uncompromising way in the early nineties, to have been more due to a want of enthusiasm for Böcklin and Thoma than to any superstitious belief that painting only existed to express certain definite things, that is to say, the things in which he was interested. The symbolism of Ingres and Delacroix, of Puvis and Maurice Denis, would not have been so distasteful to him. And indeed is he not himself a symbolist of the first water ? He showed Germans who gabbled about their nationality (behaving the while like savages !) what the true position of Germany was, and laid it down definitely that no one can be German without being European. Schiller's dictum about the effect of a good man upon his contemporaries is particularly apposite in his case ; even if his pictures are not valued in the future as they are now, he will have done enough for us.

Apart altogether from his painting no one had a greater gift for agitation than Liebermann, and no agitation ever had a worthier aim. Each of his pungent sentences was aimed at that darling of the German heart, the useless genius, and spoke out for a new kind of intellect by which it is possible to live. He did not hide his light under a bushel. His wit attracted people who did not believe in his pictures. He made amateurs of them, and if he insisted on liberal purchase as the touchstone of apprecition, it was not so much his purse that was interested as his desire to see this type of art established in Berlin. Many of his suggestions bore good fruit ; it is certainly due to him that fewer Böcklins have found their way into public and private collections. With his wit and his charm he gradually acquired a power which is nowadays becoming more legendary than ever and is having its effect. In the Berlin Secession it was partly organised by him.

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This healthy spirit has emboldened the more courageous Germans to do things which ten years ago one would have supposed our countrymen would have been the last to attempt. Liebermann himself was not able to work out the consequences of following the French even as colourists, but others who were associated with him have taken up the task. Thus we see in Germany in a small compass the drama which was played in Paris with Delacroix and Seurat in the

chief parts. As in the provinces, the German stage contents itself with a smaller company. There is no hero—no Delacroix. Courbet's part was well played; Liebermann and Trübner represented the generation of 1870. But no one has as yet attempted the part of Monet.

Liebermann followed up the discoveries of Impressionism in a wholly superficial manner. He had no inclination to carry on Monet's division of the surface; he set too much store by his drawing to risk any experiments with it. He is now in fact a stronger Whistler, but a Whistler who is by no means inclined to allow his method to be seen in its primitive condition. His tendency was to evolve regular brushstrokes from the splashes of Munkacsy, as seen for example in the *Visit to the Woman in Childbed* in the Pinakothek, and these strokes lengthened in proportion as the composition strove to express itself in large lines. Its use was to emphasise the directions of the picture, and thus to help him to attain full command of his monumental art.

The transition to the pure art of flat painting in Germany may therefore be said to have taken place almost abruptly. It might indeed be traced back to the charming Weimar landscapes of Gleichen-Russwurm, an artist who has never been appreciated as he deserves and who introduced Impressionism single-handed into German painting. He was a pupil of Hagen at Weimar and was then an admirer of Böcklin, as his picture in the National Gallery shows. Monet rescued him from this aberration, and Monet's colour with its mixture of pure tints was thenceforth his ideal. He lacked the Frenchman's temperament; his pictures are always fresh and very pleasing, in them one always feels the joyous touch of a man who was in close sympathy with Nature; but there is nothing of that distinction which is so unmistakable in Monet's most ephemeral productions. It was owing to his influence that his old teacher Hagen took to the same methods late in life. Though the attempt was not altogether successful, the spectacle of an old pupil of Achenbach who had had his successes in the days of his youth beginning as it were all over again is not without a beauty of its own.

Max Stremel and Paul Baum, two Germans of a younger generation, tried more deliberately to carry on among us the development begun by Seurat in Paris. Stremel went to Paris with Uhde in 1879, when he was twenty, and joined Munkacsy. He left the school, however, without showing a trace of the influence experienced by Uhde. He copied Rubens in the Louvre and among contemporaries Corot interested him most. Jettel took him to Holland, and it was probably there in the presence of the Vermeers in the Six Gallery, and the Delft landscapes in the Mauritshuis that some dim notion of the technique first dawned upon him. There is no doubt that Stremel and Baum got their results without contact with Seurat. No doubt they saw the Impressionists in Paris, but the subsequent movement remained hidden from them in their retreat at Knocke in Belgium. Their first exhibition of pictures on the divisionist principle was held in Berlin at Gurlitt's in 1891. It was three years later, at the first exhibition of the Libre Esthetique, that they met with Signac and Rysselberghe. At the same time they made the acquaintance of Pissarro and his friends at Knocke, as well as of the controversial writers of the movement; Gustave Kahn told them the history of Seurat.

With all due respect for this independence, we must admit the superiority of the Parisians. Perhaps the self-imposed toil of the Germans in acquiring their technique was in itself a hindrance. Stremel never gets clear away from his

palette ; his colour is always a burden on the canvas instead of an adornment. He is no pedant in his technique and even mixes his colours occasionally, when he is anxious to bring out the qualities of his material. What he lacks has nothing to do with technique at all ; it is the sparkling intelligence of a Signac or a Cross, the mobility of these great virtuosi. Baum, less rich and less logical, often gets more vivacity. The effect of his landscapes is fluent, whereas Stremel often seems to stagnate. It is the same phenomenon as in Hans Olde's conscientious pictures. Germany has for so long been unaccustomed to any technical discipline that those artists who strive to correct former errors have become curiously materialistic. Either their temperament flies over the canvas and leaves nothing of any importance behind, as in the case of Slevogt, or it gets lost altogether in the colour.

Neo-Impressionism received a decisive impulse in Germany when the Parisians themselves crossed the frontier in the nineties. Pachter, whose death was sadly premature and whose claim to a monument will appear when a history of taste in Berlin is written, engineered the transition from Menzel to Liebermann via Japan with some success. This clever and discreet connoisseur, who years before had been bold enough to exhibit the first example of Degas in his comfortable private office, began to bring the first landscapes of Signac and his school seen in Germany to the notice of the intimate circle who were admitted to that sanctum. Soon afterwards these pictures found their way into picture exhibitions at Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, and elsewhere and excited a certain number of belated strictures among the critics. The youthful circle led by Van de Velde which gathered round Count Kessler * became enthusiastic partisans and purchasers.

There is nothing surprising in the progress which the movement made in C. Hermann, Rohlfs, Richter, E. R. Weiss and in the Dresden artists W. Ritter and Berta Schrader, who followed Signac more or less closely and were remarkably quick to seize the essential principle of his work. Why should a country without any conscious artistic tradition not be ready to welcome a movement which fills so many gaps with its systematic programme and helps the individual artist over difficulties which he could otherwise only overcome by a refined and purified instinct ? The mere fact that here there is a tendency, an organised effort, to break through the unfortunate isolation of our artists, will appear a blessing to any one who takes a philosophic view of art. There may be various opinions as to the permanent value of the method ; as an educative influence among us who have no rational school of painting, it can do nothing but good. The danger that in maladroit hands this method of expression may become even less personal in Germany than it is in Paris need not alarm us, to whom it is of paramount importance that our artistic outlook should be freed from extra-artistic influences. Even if a decent harmony of colour is in itself no great achievement, it is certainly better for the eyes than the deceptive seductions of Scotch reminiscences or the banality of cheap anecdote. Everything, indeed, suggests that in Germany as in Belgium, Neo-Impressionism is merely a transition stage whose value is that it enables artists who are not committed to painting by compelling tasks, to break new ground with greater confi-

* Author of the article, " The Artistic Value of Neo-Impressionism," which appeared first in the " Tag," and then separately as a rejoinder to an attack on the movement by Von Oettingen in the same journal.

dence. This new ground is attracting so much undisciplined talent, which in its present state can accomplish nothing in either field, that one can only rejoice if by this means the present exodus from painting to decorative art may at least be accompanied by some disciplined sense of colour.

It remains for me to consider the nature of this exodus.



MAX LIEBERMANN PEN AND INK DRAWING.



BURNE-JONES: LE CHANT D'AMOUR
ISMAY COLLECTION

THE ENGLISH REACTION

ENGLISH PAINTING

The author is conscious of having done some violence to history in previous chapters. It was necessary to draw as sharp a distinction as possible between Minne and Maillol and the English movement, and clearly to emphasise the connection which unites these two men with the most characteristic art of our time. This anticipation was justified, not so much by the moderate amount of work which Minne and Maillol have achieved, as by the living instinct of which they are the expression, the hopes which they aroused and the path which they have struck out. Parallel with this solitary path runs the broad high road of familiar history which began in England. This has been regarded almost as a renaissance, the fourth, as it were, in the series which begins with the Augustan age.

Difficult as it is to ascribe such vivifying power to the Empire which produced David, as to that which, four centuries previously, founded a new world on the ruins of the old, the aspect of the epoch introduced by Blake is incomparably poorer. A characteristic of this epoch is the attempt of an independent art, confining itself to painting, to create a universal style. The Empire had pursued a great ideal, and had been in a sense necessary ; it coincided with an epoch in which the people were struggling for a new language, while it so identified itself with the fate of the great cause which created it, that the premature collapse of Napoleon brought this phase of art to an end also. Here one man had been the centre of the movement ; but the abnormality of this fact is explained if we remember that this man was the master of the world. It was reserved for the English to repeat the experiment without Napoleon.

It is difficult to understand why Blake should enjoy a reputation above that of Raphael Mengs or his successors, and why the strange nimbus that encircles him should have been conferred upon him rather than upon his compatriot Flaxman or upon any other of the many classicists of the time. Some of Flaxman's outline drawings illustrating Dante seem to me more valuable than all Blake's illustrations put together. Flaxman's art is exceedingly thin and hardly adapted to meet the demands of to-day, but it is art after all ; it is a clearly realised language of form. It flows like the crystal waters of a clear, bright brook. Blake's pictures remind one of a damp and dismal bog, deep and mysterious—chaos is always mysterious —but pestilential and repulsive. We no longer find the generation which arose a century ago and crept after the old masters, very repulsive. The naïveté with which they minimised the marble grandeurs of the ancients, the transformation of marble into porcelain, all this reverential helplessness before the great standards of antiquity, is touching when we have learned not to be irritated by it. The best works of the period have at any rate something systematic in their inadequacy ; this

rendering in little of the great models is not entirely without its charm ; the scale is reduced by rule, not arbitrarily. But Blake is sickly. His illustrations are like the obscene hallucinations of a fever-stricken dwarf obsessed by the figures of Michelangelo. They are formless things. Times of decadence are full of such manifestations ; it would surprise no one to find such an artist at the present day in a Whitechapel garret or an aristocratic club in the West End, but at that time, in the most glorious century of England, in the only century in its history which produced real art, in the age of Hogarth and Gainsborough, Blake and his works are a dark and dismal problem. England had just given the strongest impulse to Continental painting, had produced Constable and Turner, the progenitors of modern painting, when this confused dreamer, born twenty years before them, smothered English art with his fantasies.

The reaction of the Pre-Raphaelites was ostensibly directed against the obscure classicists of the Royal Academy, whose banalities were felt to be pseudo-pictorial. They determined to destroy all this false painting, and painting itself was thrown overboard in the effort. In their wild animosity against the dreary draperies of the official painters, they forgot the fiery speech of Turner, and the reaction affected, not the Academicians who were proof against any serious attack, but the best traditions of the country, the vital forces of English painting as aroused by Constable. Even their appeal to Hogarth was tinged with irony. When in 1858 the famous club in Piccadilly was formed, and named after the painter of the *Shrimp Girl*, all genuine appreciation of what was best in Hogarth had disappeared.

The realism of Millais, Holman Hunt, and Ford Madox Brown, has been regarded as the counterpart of Courbet's ; this is not altogether complimentary to the Frenchman. The art which speaks in the *Casseurs de Pierres*, has little but community of name with Brown's famous *Work*. Courbet was a great creator ; he has been reproached for adopting tedious subjects without raising them from the commonplace. Yet these things seem impressive enough now, and we would not willingly be without any of them, even the commonplace, though indeed it is difficult to say in what their banality consists. There is a sense of space in his pictures, the mind expands as it contemplates them, and is conscious not so much of the realism of this or that detail, which has been decried as ugly, as of the realism of the effect produced by this sum of forces—its harmony. It is a realism wanting in English painting, which does not stand in space, but is stuck on the surface, giving the effect of a cross-section taken at random, the depth of which the eye is expected to divine. What we see is unco-ordinated, a mere heap of details uninspired by any artistic purpose which might give them meaning. Objective extravagance fails to hide this want of inward meaning.

Work, with its innumerable symbolical allusions, produces the effect of a collection of hieroglyphs, and the eye is tortured by the effort to understand. When Brown and Holman Hunt become more human, they are sentimental to the point of insipidity. Hunt's *Light of the World* is the English Sunday in paint, wearisome to the last degree. Its dramatic qualities are bad theatrical effects. Brown's picture of *King Lear's Curse* reminds one of the provincial stage, and his love-scene from " Romeo and Juliet " arouses regretful memories of Victor Müller's picture in Munich, which treats the same subject with infinitely more warmth and sense of form, in spite of all its weaknesses.

To make things more interesting, the dress of the time at which Melozzo da Forlì painted his frescoes was adopted. The last traces of the national genius

were buried under this costume ; all that could be called English was the incredible audacity which connected these productions in any way with Raphael, and tried to emphasise in this comic manner the æsthetic appreciation that dethroned the Urbinate.

It was a stroke of genius. Two or three men of some discrimination suddenly discovered the irrefutable truth that painting was understood in Florence even before the splendid epoch of Roman art. As a truth it was not even new. Wackenröder and Friedrich Schlegel had demonstrated it fifty years before with no less energy, and the German Nazarenes were the first Pre-Raphaelites. Even Goethe, little as he thought of emotional æsthetics, revered its early originators none the less, and wrote his " Mantegna " in 1823. The first Frenchman who appreciated the Primitives was Ingres, unless we are to believe Heinse, who reports in the " Ardinghello," a saying of Poussin, to the effect that Raphael was an ass. In 1806 Ingres was copying Giotto's frescoes and buying small Fra Angelicos. About the same time or a little earlier the Chevalier Artand de Monthor began his famous collection of the Quattrocentisti.* Between 1820 and 1830 the Berlin Museum, under the administration of Waagen, secured the Primitives from the collection of Solly. The first Englishman who gave any attention to the period before Raphael, apart from Charles I., who possessed the Mantegna cartoons, was Reynolds, the first president of that Academy so hated by the Pre-Raphaelites ; as early as 1750 he preferred the Italian painters before Raphael to those after his time.

Though the discovery was not new, the moment was favourable for its wide popularity. The Pre-Raphaelites backed their conviction with the announcement that they proposed to paint in the style of the rediscovered artists so far as they could, while the public was moved by this manifestation of devotion to accept with gratitude not only their æsthetic position, but also its practical demonstration. This demonstration indeed, went far beyond that which it sought to establish. Madox Brown, Holman Hunt and some others were the first to win recognition as early Florentines from a grateful public. A London lady is said to have asked a member of the brotherhood: "How is Mr. Botticelli to-day ? "and if the anecdote is not authentic, it is very apposite. Ruskin's voyages of discovery in Italy proved a great stimulus to the appreciation of the beautiful. The reaction against Raphael was necessary to provide a standard for the modern painters. The depreciation of the preceding generation was succeeded by a calmer judgment, which combined enthusiasm for the creators of Italian painting with admiration for the genius which concentrated their attractions. People began to appreciate the grandeur of the period which set the loveliness of the Urbinate beside the Jove-like figure of Michelangelo. An appeal to facts was fatal to the distorted views of the Ruskin school, and, if humour is not out of place in such matters, there is a certain humour in the fact that any Englishmen who can be said to be at all in touch with these models, followed the admitted weaknesses of Raphael much more closely than the virtues of his predecessors. Raphael's limitations are shown in his allusive symbolism. In the Sistine Chapel we see a giant creating a world expressed in vast unifying conceptions. The mighty sweep of his expression far transcends even such a theme as the story of the creation. When we reach the Stanze we must be content with less than the high ideals aroused by what we have seen if we are to enjoy this cheerful and decorous humanism,

* Monthor was a French consul in Italy. The first edition of the catalogue of his collection (" Peintres primitifs : Collection de tableaux rapportés de l'Italie ") appeared in 1808.

if we are to attune our senses still resounding with the speech of a god, to the appreciation of these smaller episodes. The wiseacres who find a deep and symbolical meaning in these episodes and who refer to Michelangelo in terms purely material, praising the art of his foreshortening, the boldness of his exaggerations and so forth, are apt to rouse an irritation which blunts our perception of Raphael's lighter graces. When we leave the little chapel near the Stanze where Fra Angelico painted San Lorenzo, the legend of the aged monk may seem more full of youth than the work of the young Raphael. The paintings in the Stanze always seem to lose something of their effect, whether we approach them from the glittering splendour of Pintoricchio in the Borgia apartments, or from the picture of Sixtus IV. and his nephews, in the picture gallery upstairs, or from any other part of the wonderful palace which was decorated in the Pre-Raphaelite age.

But when the solitary visitor sinks under his impressions of the Eternal City; when the vast demands which it makes on his powers of appreciation reduce him to impotence; when his spirit is quelled by the spirit of the ancients which becomes harder to grasp in proportion as the discoveries of its vestiges become more numerous, and which is so great that ambition itself makes success or failure depend upon understanding and possessing it; when he loses courage and fears to take upon himself the weight of such a heritage, Raphael's smile brings relief in his depression. Among the mighty creative forces he seems a co-ordinator, a man who was less than the others and yet was blest, a youth whose charm gave him the right to wander upon Parnassus in joyous converse with the great. The superficiality of his symbolism becomes a triumphant subjectivity, an irresistible resolution to work in a sphere other than that of the mighty powers. In his limitations he finds his wisdom, and refuses to stir the depths of " the great sea of beauty " because he fears to destroy the tender ripples which only the zephyr breaths of genius can arouse. At such moments, nothing can be more refreshing to the eye than the lunette in the Stanza della Segnatura, where a garland of angels unites the three virtues of Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude, or the sibyls in Santa Maria della Pace, or the *Galatea* in the Villa Farnesina. Uplifted by the precious interplay of these rhythmical designs, the eye appreciates all the poetry which adorns the Stanza dell' Incendio.

It is a mere question of nerves how far a mind saturated with the contemplation of such things can reconcile itself with the art of the present day. He who recoils and turns away has either not seen what is best in modern art or he lacks that prudence in appreciation which is necessary when one passes from the Quattrocento to Raphael. The mind rebels against these sudden changes; nevertheless it is stimulated, and the result is a profound distaste, almost a hatred, for all ineffectual compromise. With the ancients in mind, we are less repelled by a Claude Monet than by a Walter Crane.

The masquerade affected by the Englishmen served only to emphasise their barbarism. Millais' early picture, *Lorenzo and Isabella*, a representation of a company of Florentines at table, which was regarded as a masterpiece of the school, is unpleasant to the point of indecency, for it is impossible to say whether it is intended for a masquerade or whether these pompous persons are really meant for Florentines, and whether the extraordinary legs of the gentleman in the foreground are intended to be historically exact. Millais cannot make us believe in him, and yet he lived in our time and must have known what we can and what we cannot believe. Now the old masters, whose histories have long been forgotten, who



WATTS: ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

BEER COLLECTION

worked only on commission, and for men whose ideas are now barely conceivable, succeed in inspiring belief in whatever they produced. They too looked to the past, to which, indeed, their debt is obvious. It is easy to find the ancestors of Donatello, the greatest of them all, in the museum at Naples, the place that now contains his horse's head, which Goethe took for an antique. Donatello's immortal successor in the art of sculpture was not ashamed to betray his origin yet more clearly ; what would Michelangelo be without this obvious and essential antique spirit which betrays his debt to Donatello with a thousand voices ? But the relationship was essential and not superficial. It was not the caprice of a dilettante who invites his friends to a masquerade, but the fulfilment of a supreme purpose. It rose to consciousness when the age, concentrating its impulses, rose to the height of its artistic splendour, and when the vision of an earlier artistic avatar of the race became so vivid that men were moved to ransack the earth for marbles, and would have created models for themselves had they not been discovered by excavation.

How was it possible that centuries later this instinct should suddenly produce a natural illumination in a people that owned not the smallest bond of kinship with the ancients ? For them the marble fragments imported from abroad were marvellous works of art, good enough to have a museum specially built for them ; they did not strike that personal note which the Italians had once found in them, when their shattered sanctity brought the inspiring affirmation of a glorious past.

English Pre-Raphaelitism, posturing before the Italian painters, was a wild aberration. Every painter must learn from great men ; no one, for instance, could object if the South Sea Islanders put themselves to school under ours. So far the Englishmen were well justified. But their mode of self-edification, seeing without perceiving, the system of plagiarising and then persuading one's self that one has been following a profound spiritual impulse, is vulgar. The English architects of the last generation who attempted to reproduce the Greek spirit in London buildings, made themselves generally ridiculous ; none the less the spirit which inspires the architecture of the Bank of England is more respectable than the feeble sentiment of the Burne-Jones' school with its knightly gestures and crooked backbones. Whistler's fiercest enemy cannot find fault with his indignation upon this subject. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet of the brotherhood, had Italian blood in his veins. He was a gentle, thoughtful character, the most sincere artist of this romanticism ; he was as great as an Italian can be who lives upon the past and has no present. He certainly was no genius, for genius does not bloom in deserts ; he was scarcely a form and could not give life even to the simplest subjects ; but his infinite sweetness of nature is obvious, and even in the depths of his despair he strikes chords which prove his distinction as a man if not as an artist.

But this tender and refined spirit had none of the intellectual power of his models. His head of Astarte is crudely materialistic compared with Leonardo's divine face ; the attempted softness degenerates into insipidity, and the smile has nothing of that heavenly loveliness which the creator of *La Gioconda* learned from the granite lips of the statues of Egyptian kings. The lips of Rossetti's lovers are a convention, and it is his strange use of this convention rather than the sensuous power of his art that gives them their attraction ; the same may be said of his sonnets, which are incomparably superior. Watts, the portrait painter of the group, is a better and indeed the best painter, though possibly the smallest artist, of them all. He has material where the others have only ideas, but how irredeemably ugly is this material !

The essential quality of the art of all these painters is what is called their spirit. When this spirit is discussed in England, it might be supposed that it is something in the nature of music, something completely immaterial, which requires special organs for its appreciation, as even the eye is too gross to grasp it fully. Yet when we stand before their pictures it seems as if they had not the smallest capacity for making their material anything more than it was before they set their palettes. One is inclined to ask whether they have a palette at all, but one hesitates to put the question lest one should be stigmatised as an irrelevant idiot.

But indeed the history of the Pre-Raphaelites contains the answer itself. It corresponds with the beginnings of the movement in Blake, who called his papers frescoes with some pride, and it becomes clearer and clearer as it approaches the present time. Burne-Jones marks the decisive point. His great inventive power forced him to express so much that no side of his nature remains obscure, and his limitations are consequently obvious. These allowed of a considerable extension of the domain. Near as he was to Rossetti, his numerous formal innovations produced a material change in the character of the whole movement. He seems to have laid aside his friend's aversion from Raphael. His *Mirror of Venus* is, lungo intervallo, but none the less certainly, a feminine pendant to Leo X.'s *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*. It is, however, much more monotonous. One phrase alone in the rich work of the exhausted Raphael seems enough to satisfy his successor, and this is a feeble melody indeed in comparison with the exaggerated muscularity of the cartoon. It is not, however, without its charm. Burne-Jones always contrives to make a picture of some kind. His song, though slight, is true. There is an unfailing rhythmical beauty in his figures. The earlier exponents of the Pre-Raphaelite theory were satisfied with the idea of the Florentine period; Burne-Jones has succeeded in making use of its forms. He displays a Madonna by Perugino nude, or clothes her with the draperies of Mantegna, puts in an angel from the fragment of a primitive nimbus and makes a background of an English village church, some conventional foliage à la Botticelli, or a piece of Renaissance architecture. The influence of Rossetti is manifest throughout and to him Burne-Jones owes the predominant type of his faces. These are, of course, almost exclusively female; men become women when he paints them.

This is mere handicraft. Rossetti was more competent and had an actual experience of life out of which he made pictures. Even where outward harmony is wanting in his works their spiritual harmony is all the more profound. Burne-Jones secures outward consistency in his pictures notwithstanding the heterogeneous character of their components. But this unity is as fleeting as the tableaux in a ballet at a London music-hall; it suffers from the fact that action which can only be effective in whirling dances is here petrified. The cycle of the *Creation of the World* is a scene taken from a great Creation ballet at the moment when the curtain falls. If this has not yet been staged at the Empire it is probably because such a momentary effect is insufficient for an evening's entertainment. How much less fitted this art must be for immortality.

The malicious remark of Talmi to the effect that Degas coined in the mint of Gustave Moreau is also applicable to the Burne-Jones who painted *Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*. There is a remarkable similarity between the two. Moreau seems to be marked by greater preciosity. The technique of the Englishman is far too obvious; one realises so soon that his whole art consists of but one melodious chord that one hardly requires to go on looking at his pictures. He

should never have sat down to paint. Morris rescued what was best in his friend when he forced him to draw. This delivered us from the salamander-hues of his female nude figures, which even in photographic reproductions sometimes make the observer's flesh creep.

The pictures of all the Pre-Raphaelites look best in reproductions. Blake showed a true understanding of the scope of this sort of art when he restricted himself to little things. Burne-Jones seldom rises above the art of the typographer. His repeated attempts at decoration on a larger scale all display this systematic diminutiveness. London posseses so few great frescoes that even Richmond's mosaics in St. Paul's are by no means displeasing to eyes dimmed by fog. Sir Edward, however, has ventured outside London; he has not hesitated to appear in an area where artists of all periods have depicted their ideas of space. The mosaics in the apse of the little American chapel at Rome were made from his drawings. They are his poorest extant productions and in full consonance with the monotonous domesticity of the homely building. Very different must be the prayers of the modern Christian in such excellent dwelling rooms, from those of the worshippers on whom the bearded Christ looked down!

It only remained to commercialise his methods and to bring them from the canvas back to the paper from which they sprang. Walter Crane effected this transition with a sure and a rapid hand, nor is he to blame for so doing. He restricted his ambitions, and like an honest craftsman he did not attempt more than he could perform. Blake should have begun where this latest representative of the school left off. Crane's modesty secured him many sympathies, even beyond the circle of his grateful countrymen and made people forgive him his pictures. For this most capable of the Pre-Raphaelites takes the brush in hand at times. Between the execution of his illustrations for children's books and friezes for wall-papers, he paints pictures and has even ventured upon sculpture. Three or four years ago the Arts and Crafts Society showed some examples. They were in plaster, and looked like paper, things only possible in a country where sculpture is practically non-existent.



WALTER CRANE. DRAWING.

ENGLISH SCULPTURE: ALFRED STEVENS

CRANE's sculpture supplies an obvious explanation of the weakness of modern English art. Such things are impossible in a country where any attention is given to sculpture.

There is no plastic art in England. The nineteenth century produced but one solitary sculptor, Alfred Stevens, and he has left almost nothing behind him. His best known work is the unfinished Wellington monument in St. Paul's. Unfortunately the position of the monument against the light makes it very difficult to see, apart from the fact that few visitors would look for beauty among the miserable poverty of the surrounding monuments. The four prophets in the mosaic of the dome, which are also from his drawings, are quite ineffective in their present position. The design for the Isaiah in the Tate Gallery gives a better idea of the work, an impression which does not depend on the contrast it offers to the dreary mediocrity of contemporary English art surrounding it. It has a breadth and an absolute certainty of execution the very opposite of the characteristics which other Englishmen display to excess; there is nothing cloying, sentimental or decadent about it. Yet Stevens has none of the realism of Holman Hunt and Madox Brown, with whom he was at least contemporary, having been born in 1817. The portrait of Mrs. Colman in the Tate Gallery is quieter and more distinguished than most of its companions.

Stevens, like the others, owes a debt to Italy, but he certainly did not draw from sources patronised by the Pre-Raphaelites. If the Brotherhood is to be taken seriously as a school, Stevens must be reckoned among its opponents. He was so in fact, though indirectly, for, in spite of Ruskin, he found much worth learning in Raphael. He came to Rome as a very young man and became imbued with the creative art of the Renaissance, not because he had any special enthusiasm for the history of this period, but because he had no teacher and no tradition, and found in it a school from which he could easily learn. It was only natural that certain outward idiosyncrasies of this school should have clung to him. It was indeed by its teaching, that he became a master.

The pictures of Burne-Jones never suggest a man whose art comes naturally to him; Stevens, on the other hand, does not work in the style of the Renaissance, he is a Renaissance artist, and might have been born in the Cinquecento. He was sculptor, painter, and above all things, architect, by nature. At Hampstead he built one storey of a house for himself; in the garden was the studio for the Wellington monument, and he decorated one of the rooms with carved panels which are unfortunately not quite finished.* The house is at present occupied by a school. Externally the architecture is as undistinguished as that of many other houses in London. The panelling within is of a rare correctness; the ornament is admirably distributed; there is no apparent effort to break with tradi-

* Wellington House, Eton Road.



ALFRED STEVENS: MARBLE CHIMNEY PIECE IN DORCHESTER HOUSE, LONDON

tion and yet the detail is extraordinarily strong. His architectural ideas are more clearly expressed in Captain Holford's dining room in Dorchester House, which he completed in 1872, three years before his death. The house is situated in Park Lane, a street in which it would be possible to spend ten years without exhausting the artistic treasures of its palaces. The Holford collection is one of the most famous in England. Before reaching the dining-room, the finest examples of Rembrandt, Velazquez and Van Dyck possessed by any private person in London may be studied; and this, as may be supposed, does not produce the mood most favourable for the appreciation of modern art. None the less my impression of Stevens's fireplace is one of the most remarkable I brought away with me from London.

I owe it to the efforts of Count Kessler that I am able to offer my readers excellent illustrations of this practically unique example of English art.* The reader must imagine a vast hall, severe in style, colder and sterner than the Renaissance rooms which inspired it, in which the chimneypiece of gray marble with its white figures forms a natural centre. We are reminded of the tombs of the Cinquecento, but the effect in this London room is more austere. It is no mere architectural sculpture. The constructive idea uses the splendid decorative material in accordance with principles which consistently exploit everything that can be logically justified in this decorative art. The two bowed female figures, which must be imagined as larger than life interrupt the columns supporting the wide shelf, above which rise two narrower stages. The central stage is decorated with a heavy ornament of garlands, and at the centre of the upper stage stands a child holding the shield with a dog in relief. The distribution of the gray and white marble is very happily conceived, although at first the great size of the cold gray mass with the heavy veins in the main shelf produces a disagreeable impression. The frame of white marble with its red and green inlay which surrounds the huge fireplace greatly helps the effect of the whole. The same red and green framework is used throughout the hall, the colour-scheme of which is perhaps not entirely suited to the numerous wood panels. The general effect is so unexpected in the London of the effeminate Pre-Raphaelites, and one's eye has grown so accustomed to dim draperies, that it can hardly appreciate the full strength of this art at the first glance. The modelling of the two bowed bodies defies description; the spectator vainly tries to combat his impression with a theory that here is a man who took what was not his, that he is stealing from Michelangelo, and that these same figures recline in other poses on the tombs of Florence. For they are not the same, and if they were, we could but rejoice at an additional masterpiece from the hand of Michelangelo; possibly a youthful work, when the teaching of Verrocchio had still the power to restrain his soaring ambition. There is a similarity in certain details; the face of one of the figures is like a rejuvenated face of Michelangelo's, and the mighty thigh of the other figure to the left of the fireplace also reminds one of the master. The richness of the masses, the lines of which run in every conceivable direction, is astounding. Observe how the almost horizontal leg of the left hand figure forms a perfect curve around the other foot, and how the other leg repeats the angle

* The plaster model in the South Kensington Museum gives but a very feeble idea of the work. The two books upon Stevens, one by H. Stannus and the other by W. Armstrong with very mediocre illustrations, have long been out of print. My warmest thanks are due to Count Kessler for the infinite trouble which he took to get permission for the taking of photographs.

of the former, while at the same time the thigh turns inward ; the continuity of leg and thigh is extraordinary at this point ; then note how the body turns slowly toward the fireplace, and the posture of the arms. Both figures are set in the corners precisely so as to harmonise with the sharp and weighty lines of the gray marble. How it was done is a mystery. The conditions to be fulfilled are so manifold that the realisation is bewildering at first. One looks voluntarily for the weakness of this many-sided achievement, and from every point of view one finds the same beneficent richness, the same grace, and the same certainty. The rendering of the strain upon the bodies of the caryatides, which was the most difficult of the problems presented, is wonderfully achieved. Every line that should express strain does so in fact, yet the figures do not seem to be overwhelmed by a material burden. There is nothing to remind us of the groaning slaves of the Renaissance. A marvellous taste, like that of Raphael, has discovered a middle course, satisfying the realism which demands a symbolical treatment of the subject and yet excluding everything which would vulgarise verisimilitude and destroy the logic of the whole. The composition has been compressed into the smallest possible space ; the heads have as much room as they require and no more. Here, at the point of strain, the lines all run together as closely as possible ; the shoulders are given the least possible freedom, and the heads immediately divert the eye from the heavy plinth ; the elbows on the inner side are widely extended so as to prolong the supporting surface, the outer elbows form exquisite brackets. Beneath, the effect naturally forces the figures outwards, but the strongly bent knees thrust it vigorously inwards again. This is the decisive action ; the manner in which the figures bear their load depends on the manner in which they sit. Whenever the eye attempts to follow up one element, it is arrested by another. The combination of soaring and carrying in the movement, the wonderful relation of the two figures to the whole construction, and the details which serve to enframe the fire-place, make up the beauty of the whole.

Criticism will always attack the angel at the summit, but the brilliant coat of arms would have been an insufficient conclusion to the whole. It is too flat and too small ; yet it could not be made any larger, as otherwise the beautiful curve which fits almost to a hair would have been destroyed. The sculptor himself realised with true insight that something of the pliancy of the two supporting figures must be repeated above. He exaggerated the hair of the boy, which seems like a rag of drapery ; he very delicately displayed a leg, which leads the eye to the plane of the background, and mitigates the mathematical effect of the shield. It must, however, be admitted that in this part of the work one does not feel the same absolute certainty of touch which distinguishes the remainder.

MacColl, in his study of Stevens, speaks of the artist's " masculine decoration " which left but few traces behind, and those speedily effaced by the movement which was directed by Morris. It is somewhat extraordinary, especially in England, that any one should attempt to pit this Italianate Englishman against the Gothic School as the virile force ; yet he is absolutely right. In every work of Stevens, whether painting, sculpture, or architecture, the prominent characteristics are strength and a sense of proportion. " A wonderful man " was the phrase of the worthy teacher who showed us over Wellington House. He must indeed have been a man of wonderful character and very different from those pious somnambulists who contented themselves with the wonders of the feminine world. He was truly of the stuff of the old masters and could take pride in the fact. There was no trace of

eclecticism in this successor of Michelangelo. His work has the quality of inevitability, and it was so perfect as he produced it that a discussion as to whether it derives from the Renaissance is as unmeaning as inquiries about the quarry from which he got his marble. "I know of but one art" was his motto. He had but one style, which did not depend on the introduction of women nude or clothed, but on balance and proportion. He is of the tribe of Hildebrand.

Of course he remained practically unknown. The only Frenchman who has ever heard of him is Rodin. Germans who write upon art never mention his name. In England he is known to the young men who know everything.

It is thus easy to understand how it is that the calm energy, which we admire in Dorchester House and from which we might have expected a hundred works, should have left no single example of equal perfection. The Wellington monument is but half complete. In its present condition it seems to suffer from the baroque style of the two interesting groups on either side. But the main figure, the equestrian statue, to which the whole construction in its present form was to serve as a pedestal, may entirely change this impression. The young sculptor, Tweed, is at work on this figure from the sketches left behind by Stevens, and as far as can be judged from the great plaster model which I saw in his studio, he has carried out the master's intentions with great tact.

These and a few sketches are all that remain of England's greatest sculptor. It is said that he was chiefly occupied in designing iron plaques for fire-places, which are all extremely beautiful. Were he to return to-day, he would probably find even this branch of industry closed to him.

WHISTLER

THE ENGLISHMAN

The lack of archæological lore in English painting which had delighted Géricault and his friends, distressed England even before Constable's death. She overtook the Continental advance with amazing agility, and as all the preliminaries for French classicism were absent in her case, she constructed something which had indeed as little national justification: a gigantic exaggeration of German Nazarenism, more imposing, cruder, and, if realism within the limits of an imitative conception can be healthy, healthier. This realism was satisfied with a naturalistic treatment of details in a rendering that was by no means natural, and made use of lighter colours than had hitherto been applied to history-painting. Inferior as this unnatural art was to the most modest efforts of the landscape painters, and even to the mannerism of the "portrait-manufacturers," to whom by comparison it almost gave the appearance of a great school, it made a successful appeal to the public. It was comprehensible. Its forms left nothing to the imagination, and that which the mob failed to understand in the laboriously executed work only tended to raise its repute. Even in the more recondite efforts of a Holman Hunt or a Millais there was always something perfectly obvious, a well drawn leg, a significant look, a monitory hand, which the public took home contentedly. When finally Rossetti expressed the fervour of his emotion in the curved lips of an ecstatic female head, he found utterance for the soul of the people. The message was accepted after a short struggle as a divine gift. For the first time, Nature made the heart of the multitude beat more quickly, a Nature that had been discovered by the circuitous way of Florence, and was found to be more English than the farmsteads of the Bergholt master. Popularity, denied to England's most faithful son, who had done more for native art than Gainsborough, or even the great Hogarth, was accorded to these enthusiasts. Ruskin managed to include them in the sanctuary of his heart where Turner was enthroned, and pronounced these practitioners of his barbaric theory concerning Italian painting the non plus ultra of contemporary art. Pre-Raphaelitism was not a tendency. So utterly did it absorb all the artistic interest of the country, that we must perforce recognise it as representative, unless we are to deny the existence of any English art since Constable.

This immense prestige was the advantage the great English Nazarenism enjoyed over the little German movement. We Germans may be thankful that our pious painters in Italy never organised their criminal conspiracy so perfectly. A strain of the Köhler creed is still to be found, it is true, in some of our ideologues, and we have a dozen of their breed for one of Constable's. But we resist. We have a minority that stands out against the mass. In England the reaction seems



D. G. ROSETTI: SIR GALAHAD FED WITH THE SANCGREAL

BY PERMISSION OF BERESFORD R. HEATON ESQ., LONDON

to have torn up by the roots all the centenarian elements of a native art capable of development. The only notable painter who was able to assert himself in England simultaneously with the dominant tendency, was an American trained in Paris, and even he, whom Ruskin involuntarily raised to the status of a hostile force, was fundamentally an unfrocked Pre-Raphaelite.

His nationality was a paradox, like the man himself. His origin in a country which in art still retains the dependence of a colony on the mother-country, may account for the fact that he appears as a pure native among his adopted fellow countrymen. The hundred skins in which nature and his own dexterity in disguises enveloped him conceal a perfectly English core. This is apparent, not only in his preference for English models, especially for London, which did not exist for the Pre-Raphaelites, and, indeed, had received no real recognition from art before Whistler, not only in his renderings of typical qualities of the populace, as far as it can be said to exist in the gigantic city and to draw a character therefrom. Whistler is an Englishman in a still wider sense. He is the only modern artist who is responsible for the further development of the English tradition. He at least attempted to deal with those tendencies which give physiognomy to the history of English painting, and must therefore be recognised so far as the coping-stone of the structure. His internationalism, of course, was un-English. Everything that happened in Europe towards the middle of the nineteenth century had its echo in him. It was to his advantage that he did not overlook all contemporary activities like the Pre-Raphaelites, nor feel a certain coldness or contempt for the French, like Constable and Hogarth. The cool self-confidence which has become proverbial was merely a screen interposed between himself and the world. His cosmopolitanism was not only useful to him; it was solely by its means that he became the figure whose originality has given rise to positive myths in London and in Paris. Indeed, we cannot conceive of him without this mercurial essence, that made him at home everywhere, both in life and art; but it is open to question whether in the future he will find or keep a place in the hearts of any one people, or of the world at large.

Even now it is difficult to say where he belongs. When some one suggested that he was the kinsman of Velazquez, Whistler replied by the delightful impertinence which his devoted biographer Duret seeks mistakenly to soften. Others say he began with Rembrandt. Then he Europeanised Rossetti. Then he is supposed to have conquered Courbet. That he invented the Japanese is almost an historic fact. And all this was really too amusing to be considered seriously. It is unpardonable to spoil a good joke, whether we agree with it or not. I feel convinced that he is still smiling over it among the shades.

Whistler the painter had already achieved a certain eminence when he painted his first large work, the *Piano* picture. The essential qualities of the *Carlyle* and the *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* are more than indicated here, the brilliant pattern, the dexterity with which a profile is set against the right sort of wall effectively, the distinction of the scene. It is difficult to understand why it was refused at the Salon. It has all the qualities of a true Salon-picture, and a degree of expression which it might have been supposed even the public of 1859 would have tolerated. It is superior to most of his later works. The fine black of the lady's dress against the white wall, the careful execution of Lady Seymour Haden's delicate profile, the juxtaposition with the child in white, the happy choice of the warm mahogany-colour of the piano, the best portrait of the three—such simple

and relatively powerful effects he rarely found later, and more rarely sought. On the other hand, few of his weaknesses appear in the picture. The pictorial execution is not quite in harmony with the design. The simplicity is somewhat forced, and hardly conceals the determination to make more of the quiet scene than is proper to it. A thoughtfulness akin to Fantin-Latour softens the pretentiousness. It is an indispensable element, and reveals Whistler's debt to his first friend on French soil. Indulgent critics of the future will no doubt bracket Whistler with Fantin. They were very similar powers of a totally different kind. Both stand aloof from the great artistic achievements of the nineteenth century, the one deliberately, the other involuntarily. Neither was a creator in the true sense; both transformed inherited materials, and the results of their activity were not indispensable to modern art-development. Fantin, by stern self-discipline, arrived in the process at an organic expression, so that each separate work gains as we recall his general level of excellence. Whistler loses when tried by the same criterion. His most brilliant achievements suffer from the lack of economy in the sum of his work.

They became acquainted soon after Whistler's arrival from America in 1855, in the Louvre, where Fantin was painting his brilliant copies, and Whistler was nibbling, somewhat indiscriminately, at the Old Masters, to refresh himself a little after the barren hours spent in Gleyre's studio. According to H. Béraldi, he copied Ingres' *Angélique*, the little picture of cavaliers ascribed to Velazquez, and, as the London exhibition of 1905 showed, Boucher's *Diana*, in the Louvre. His first portrait of himself, as Duret remarks, may be referred to Rembrandt's head of a young man in the same collection. Fantin's masterly talent was the first momentous influence on his as yet embryonic personality. The prudence of the modest master, who never promised more than he could perform, curbed the ambition that was thirsting for cheap laurels. His technique, matured by long-continued copying of the old masters, spurred the novice to more serious study. His susceptibility to intimate charm added depth to the superficiality of his comrade, and revealed the quiet world of the interior to him also. There are many connecting links between the Frenchman's early pictures, his portrait of himself before the easel, and more especially the *Deux Sœurs* of 1858, and Whistler's *Piano* picture. The influence is also apparent in the finest work of 1861, the *Music Room*, with the lady in the riding-habit; it becomes more evident in the small *Fille Blanche* before the fireplace of 1865, and seems even to linger in certain interiors of the seventies. The distinguished repose of the *Mother* and the *Carlyle* was certainly inspired by Fantin's spirit. The moral advantage derived from the comrade of his youth was stronger than the material. Fantin's quiet manner dies out among Whistler's multiple tendencies. It was too solid to chain the butterfly for long. But he owed many a lesson to the advice of this friend, with whom he remained in intimate relation, more especially during the first ten years of his artistic activity.

The *Piano* picture was the starting-point of two roads. The one led to the portraits which were christened Harmonies in White later on, of which the famous large *Fille Blanche* of 1862 was Opus i. This was the English road, on which the ideologue walked. The other reveals the more solid qualities of a conception closer to Nature, and leads to the series of landscapes inaugurated in 1861 by the *Coast of Brittany*. This is the French road. The two run parallel—the *Fille Blanche* and the *Blue Wave* belong to the same year—and end in a foreign

land. They have no more in common than a Rossetti and a Courbet. Whistler's unwillingness to decide for one or the other is characteristic of his art and of himself. It was his misfortune to have inclined most to Rossetti. Duret denies this important influence, and here offers one of the many instances of Whistler's irresistible power of suggestion. The "Avant-Garde," famous as the first defender of Manet, has lately associated his name just as unconditionally with that of Whistler. *

The exaggerated modesty which leads him to take up the position of a scrupulous narrator, confining himself to the presentation of valuable documents, has not saved him from overlooking what may be called an historic fact here. Bénédite, Count Kessler and others have confirmed it, without drawing the inevitable conclusions. Duret was shrewd enough to see that if Rossetti had really exercised a decisive influence upon his hero, the less a hero would he be. He came to the conclusion that the similarity was due to accident. The sister of Rossetti's *Fiammetta* sat to Whistler for the *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine* of 1864, and it was the models and not the works that were akin. The techniques had nothing in common. But the *Princesse* is the direct descendant of the *Fille Blanche*, differently dressed, and Fiammetta's sister did not sit for this first blossom of the Rossetti graft in Whistler's work. The difference in technique is superficial, though Kessler insists upon it also. "The purpose is Pre-Raphaelite," he writes, "the hand, the eye, the execution is modern." † And accordingly, he infers the essential difference of these pictures, and the works of Rossetti, Millais, &c., with which they invite comparison. I believe, on the contrary, that this emphasises the more intimate connection. The conclusion goes beyond the *Q.E.D.* Rossetti's execution is modern too, because, unhappily, it is not quattrocento; Burne-Jones is, if possible, more modern still; and in this scale there is no reason why the superlative should not be accorded to Whistler. The arrangement of the *Fille Blanche* with the bluish white bear-skin recalls Alfred Stevens, who was then, at the period of his first successes, as actual as possible, and the Japanese mise en scène of the Princesse may have seemed a great advance in Makart's time. Unmodern, on the other hand, or, in plain words, insufficient, is the conception, the phantom-like yet insupportably material quality of the apparition, the incapacity for making a body stand on its legs in any medium, and for preserving the relation of the parts in the attempted plasticity. The whole tendency to give a spiritual appearance without any spiritual essence, the ghostly by means of a trap-door, is Rossettian. The artist simply asserts what he had to demonstrate, reproduces his mystery instead of creating it and making it effectual. It is the trick of a juggler at a fair. But we do not want to see the artist behind his white lady, but in her: we want to know how she works, how the puppet comes to life, how she moves and lives, and if there is a mystery we like to have it explained without so much wear and tear of our senses. But the apparatus is unequal to these demands. It remains merely glass eyes, false hair, clothes, carpet and curtains. The more energetically we contemplate it, the more cruelly is the illusion unveiled, and we recognise the affinity of the puppet to those works which demand of the spectator the inspiration which failed the artist. There are no spirits, and nothing happens of itself least of all in art, which knows nothing of the arbitrary and accidental. But there are works

* Théodore Duret, "Histoire de J. McNeill Whistler et de son Œuvre," Floury, Paris, 1904.

† In "Kunst und Künstler," iii. p. 460.

of such power, that we seem to see spirits rather than mortals before us. They arise only by the creation of a stronger reality than the wonted sphere of our existence. They are never exhausted, no matter how often we stand greedily before them. Not because they satiate us, but because they are continually lifting our desires into higher regions. We learn to see better ; it is not what we see that is novel. But Pre-Raphaelitism made its effects by a strangeness, a remoteness inherent in the style, and not created by the painter as such. Whistler modified the strangeness with which Rossetti had been content. The mysterious quality was taken from the curved lips and Leonardesque hair and distributed over the whole surface of the object, becoming less tangible, less specifically conventional, and more pictorial, because less linear ; but this did not alter the nature of the Pre-Raphaelite product. It is only the lesser precision of the outline which prevents us from recognising Rossetti's world forthwith. With all my antipathy to the painter of Beatrice, Whistler's variation on the theme seems to me inferior. Rossetti's spleen is his excuse. His barbaric painting has the significance of the fixed idea. The artist's error loses something of its virulence from the fact that the ecstasy which becomes so rigid in the pictures found harmonious form in the sonnets. Whistler, on the other hand, only simulates ecstasy, and therefore is capable of more deliberate rendering. He excites himself mirror in hand, notes richer details, and is able to take care that sentimentality shall not proclaim itself too nakedly. For this very reason, however, he arouses a stronger antagonism. The fragmentary character of his cultivated creation, an obvious reflection of fragmentary emotions, irritates more than the asceticism of Rossettian fervour. The excitement of a Primitive, who makes use of lower forms, is more respectable than the inconsequence of a higher intellect.

Léonce Bénédite considered Millais the source of inspiration, supporting his opinion by citing Fantin's and Whistler's enthusiasm for the *St. Agnes' Eve* in the Academy of 1863.* The relation to Millais is no more evident than to other Englishmen of the same period. But personally Whistler had much in common with the lively master of the Pears' soap advertisement. He too loved to gambol in all the fields of painting, and both shook off their vague relation to the Pre-Raphaelites with equal facility. He made, at a due interval, the remarkable transition from the school of Rossetti to the so-called antique, to which the era of the Queen lent such unusually adequate relief. The immediate impulse was given by the youthful Albert Moore, who as Bénédite said, "was perhaps the first to develop that elegant taste for antique things which blends so agreeably with the English character." In the correspondence with Fantin—the most important source of information as to Whistler's psychology—could he but have guessed what he left for posterity here!—the enthusiastic introduction of this new friend synchronises with the production of the third *Symphony in White*, the picture of the two agreeably posed draped figures on a sofa, exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1867. It is easy to recognise Moore's method of arranging a piece of furniture with draperies of multitudinous folds in which female forms are hidden. But whereas Alma Tadema and Co. proceeded to conjure up a whole five o'clock tea antiquity for the delighted public by these methods, Whistler, always less drastic than his prototypes, contented himself with the rhythm. He renounced the antique furniture as he had before renounced the Florentine, and only allowed

* "Gazette des Beaux Arts," June 1905, pp. 510, 511 ; *cf.* also *id.* August 1905, pp. 146, 147.

a gentle echo of the teasing play of line to fill his quiet rooms. Rossetti's ethereal mood also floats round these more feminine figures, about whose slender limbs the soft Liberty silk flows caressingly. A beautiful still-life is produced by the delicate colours of the stuff. The title Symphony suits it better than the earlier arrangements on the same basis. The only dubious element is the determination to offer more than his inspirers, and to create human beings by means of the higher decorative arts.

Together with the echoes of Moore we find traces of the influence of Leighton, the Reynolds of the latest development of English academicism. Whistler's pretty pastels on gray paper, of youthful Greek girls in clinging draperies, are an agreeable homage to the President, who, according to Muther, "felt more intensely than any modern the beauty of the Hellenic line."



FROM A WOODCUT. BY OKUMURA MASANOBU.

THE FRENCHMAN

The English element in Whistler is an easily recognisable quality in his whole work, rather than in any special work. We can never say of this or that picture that it is English, for it is always something else as well. We saw him participating in a curve of the London movement from afar, separated by a medium which possessed the quality of refining its prototypes. He took away their brutality of movement, softened their colour, eliminated insistent detail, made them more pictorial. The medium clearly contains more of Whistler than the silhouette reflected in it. It may be recognised as a French envelope. He watched what was going on in London from Paris. There are a few pictures, in which he concentrates his gaze entirely upon France, in which there is no trace of any English influence. They are not his most characteristic works, for the English strain is indispensable to a perfect impression of his personality. But they are his most promising works, I might say his strongest, were this not contrary to logic. Courbet carried the beginner away with him far more powerfully than Fantin. This difference was natural. The enthusiasm with which the whole generation from Manet to Monet hailed the revelation of the master of Ornans took hold on the stranger within the gates also, though comparatively late. The *Piano* picture shows as yet no trace of Courbet. It was not until 1861, some two years later, almost six years after his arrival in Paris, that the first dated document appears testifying to Courbet's entrance into the circle of the painter, the coast landscape with the stones, *The Coast of Brittany*. A rough hand seizes the brush. The meditative artist becomes the eager observer of Nature, and paints as well as he can, not what he thinks, but what he sees before him. This new conception tears down the whole artistic structure already reared. The sureness of hand that characterised the *Piano* picture is wholly absent. Whistler's first steps in the new path remind us of a pupil who has been for many years under a bad teacher, and is less apt than the novice in the hands of a new master trying to instil more rational methods. The stones on the beach are painted with all the laboriousness of a child, each one separately, with sharp contours, and without any research of colour. A dark Havana brown is laid upon a lighter shade of the same colour. The girl in the foreground is lying as awkwardly as possible; and even in the primitive rendering we see in certain gradations that this detail was not treated with the same realism as the land, the stones, and the blue sea. So sharply does the sincerity even of a beginner react in the presence of Nature. In spite of its awkwardness, the picture is effective, and not only as a touching exhibition of unskilfulness. The absolute self-surrender to Nature gives the fragmentary form a breath of life. It is a very bad, a very amateurish work, but nearer to art than all the phrases of the Pre-Raphaelites. The studies of heads of this period are also quite foreign to them. The *Mère Gérard* and the woman's head belonging to Comtesse Beárn have not the faintest resemblance to the Beatrice; the old *Marchand de Faïence*, with his pipe, rather suggests an early Van Gogh. The portrait of Ionides, which has unfortunately cracked as a result of loading the dark pigment on an ill-prepared ground, does not suggest the "arrangeur," but an artist intent on the rendering of life. It would be interesting to know the exact date of these heads. The



WHISTLER: CAPRICE IN PURPLE AND GOLD (1864)

biographers place them vaguely in the first Parisian period, perhaps, therefore, before the *Piano* picture. In this case the anomaly would be still greater. But against this we have the fact that the portrait of himself of 1857–58, the natural predecessor of the *Piano* picture, does not at all agree with the heads. In addition we know positively that *La Mère Gérard* was exhibited at the Academy in 1861. We may therefore fairly assume that the heads were contemporary with the *Coast of Brittany* of this year. Nevertheless, we have no reason to suppose that they were painted under the same influence as the sea-piece. The *Mère Gérard* has very little in common with Courbet's heads of the same period. The reddish, coarsely brushed face with the white shawl, rather suggests Bonington's housekeeper, and the splashes of colour in parts, Constable. It is not impossible that this marks Whistler's first contact with the master of the *Hay-Wain*, who was occasionally of service to the landscape painter later on. The Courbet-like character studies inaugurated by these heads had no further results. The tendency of the elegant portrait painter admitted of no ruthless sincerity. To achieve originality and dexterity on this road demanded more earnest efforts than the indication of enthusiastic girlish emotion. On the other hand, he continued on the path he had struck out in the coast picture for some time, and with brilliant success. The *Blue Wave* of Biarritz, painted in the summer of 1862, on the projected but abandoned journey to Madrid, was the artist's first great venture. No one could have foreseen such an advance on the coast scene in such a comparatively short time. The awkwardness and uncertainty, the fumbling of the beginner, are completely overcome, and the intensity of outlook is not weakened. The relation to Courbet is not that of a mere imitator, and exists only as the natural result of an impulse received. Whistler received the task from Courbet. He took the problem and worked it out independently. The impulse served only to give birth to a new form. Courbet never painted, still less desired to paint, such a lovely sea-piece. His sea is immeasurably mightier. The impact of the material drives us out of that meditative mood in which we can take account of the accidental grace of a curve or the harmony of colour. We are too close to the elementary power of the water, and the consciousness of this proximity makes it easy—nay, desirable—to sacrifice the rest. Whistler had not the almost physically impressive power of the great naturalist. He is the metropolitan, who has grown nervous in the turmoil of streets and the exertions of intellectual activity. But with admirable taste, with a refinement denied to the peasant of Ornans, here, where his sincerity was no less than that of the other, he sought after a form corresponding to his strength and giving full expression to his gifts. Courbet was a coarse fellow, but to suit his coarseness he invented the right wide-meshed net, which made it into strength. Whistler organised his weaknesses, made his manner pulsate in so many small channels that it became rich, and only tenderness and supple grace remained. His gift was more ornamental. He removes himself and us from the power of the element, and makes us enjoy its curves and colour. But the removal does not divorce us from Nature. The curves ripple, the colour retains expression. The blue is exquisitely related to the brown, the foam plays enchantingly over the terraced waves, but more beautiful still is the watery expanse under the vaporous sky. This means that the harmony of the colours is no mere effect of the palette, no " arrangement," like so many inventions of the tasteful colourist ; the supple line is not invented for the sake of the arabesque, like so many of the skilful painter's poses. The artist unites with Nature, and adds strength to what is natural. The

water flows; it has the joyous wilfulness of the element; and the eye, gliding over the waves, and startled by no secondary intention, communicates a like joyous movement to the soul.

Whistler, like Manet and all his successors, as long as he felt himself akin to this circle, strove after some differentiation of Courbet's animalism. The beauty of the *Blue Wave* cannot conceal what a penalty his temperament had to pay in the process, as compared with Manet. Manet, with all his enrichment, with all his cultivation of instinct, retained the primitive force, the concentration, the penetrating quality of Courbet's vigour. We divine even in this, the best of Whistler's sea-pieces, what it cost him to achieve the necessary concentration of the boldly conceived reality. The representation of so elementary a side of Nature demanded a gift of invention which the painter, rich as he was in ideas, did not possess, and the solution of a problem so little suited to his manner was a tour de force which could scarcely succeed a second time. For Whistler it was necessary that he should be able to relate. Here he was like Liebermann, who never arrived at a full expansion of his characteristic style in a rendering of Nature unenlivened by man or beast. He required a model richer in details, more variety of material, things better expressed by the pencil than by the brush, animated silhouettes, and so was obliged to turn away very soon from the totally different art of Courbet. The step is very apparent in the *Frozen Thames*, painted shortly after the *Blue Wave*. Here the theme has nothing to do with Courbet. Such a multitude of straight, thin lines as the rigging of the ship presents would have been a nightmare to Courbet. To Whistler, on the contrary, the design was absolutely congenial, much more so than the *Blue Wave*. We get nearer to him here, although he did not take nearly so much trouble over the picture. It looks as if it had been painted at one sitting. The colour is less choice, the grace less tangible, but the demure distinction of the rapid rendering is irresistible. There is not a stroke too few or too many; these nervous strokes paint, giving silhouettes more and more vaporous towards the background. The technique approaches that of lithography; but, what is more important, it expresses perfectly what the artist saw; and in this presentment, so adequate to his nature, we grasp him as he grasped Nature. While Courbet disappears entirely from this conception, Whistler's relation to Manet's circle is revealed. From the *Frozen Thames* we might place him somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sisley, the similarity of certain forms counting for less in this connection than the affinity of temperament. This is borne out by the picture of the following year (1862), *Old Westminster Bridge*, with the building of the new bridge in progress, which is a kind of solidified Sisley, of more compact forms, and shows a detail in the figures which approaches Manet. Whistler never painted anything more solid; and it is a cruel irony that this picture should have suffered by the numerous cracks in the thick impasto. Its superiority to preceding works lies in the amazing extension of the pictorial quality. It is obvious that the draughtsman was attracted by the cross-beams of the numerous scaffolds, with the swarming workmen. But the brush gave the means for the representation. The suggestion of a uniform surface and yet of structure, the veiling of the frankly accepted detail, the wealth of the material, which has shades for the richly toned water, the wood, the stone, the workmen, and finally the panorama on the other side of the river, could only have been invented by a painter. And it was a great painter who advanced from this to the beautiful picture of 1865, *Old Battersea Bridge*, the work which, regardless of



WHISTLER: THE LAST OF OLD WESTMINSTER (1862)
POPE COLLECTION

what followed, we may call Whistler's ultimate form. Here Whistler not only accomplished the natural task of making the pictorial qualities of his work more pronounced, but also found a richer and more precise expression for his personal conception. Not only did the draughtsman retire into the background, but also the specifically Parisian painter who recalled Sisley. The sparkling element in the picture of Westminster Bridge, the lively variety which harmonises with the design, seems somewhat superfluous beside the new picture, over-loquacious and not simple enough. Here, on the other hand, a perfectly undivided form gradually discloses the same lightly touched things, without showing them to us. The delivery has more breath, so to speak, and expresses itself without exhaustion, with a quiet ease, which makes the subject-matter much more impressive. The brush has rendered the broad surface of the river more supply than the structure of the *Westminster Bridge* allowed it to do, in a more liquid fashion than it had ever done before. Water, bridge, and banks hang together like a single being, and at the same time display richer intervals than the earlier picture. The detail retires in favour of the masses, without becoming indistinct. We see all that is necessary, even to the girders between the posts and the olive-coloured balustrade behind which people and vehicles are passing. The magic lies in the rich bluish atmosphere, which was as carefully detailed here as the objects in the former work. Hence the rich gradations of the animated Constable-like points of colour from the figures of the nearer bank to the vanishing houses and towers of the farther shore. The stages are so unobtrusive that even the things in the distance seem distinct and tangible. The painter compels us to go over the bridge with him. His renewed intimacy with Courbet, with whom he was painting during the summers of 1865 and 1866 at Trouville, obviously contributed to the stronger development of tones which distinguishes the painter of *Battersea Bridge* from the Impressionists. The latter tried to keep the colour as effective as possible in gradation. Manet and Monet too used contrasts for gradation, *i.e.*, they essayed variety, to give the utmost animation to the surface, a process which was only to be carried out by an extremely flexible structure of spots, and left the lion's share of the modelling to the brush-stroke. The harmony depended on the unison of all the parts of the picture, not on the relation of its details. Each detail, therefore, had to be sketched out with the greatest precision, because it could not afterwards be altered without modifying the whole. Whistler, on the other hand, could reel off his scale cautiously. He enriched his planes, like the old Dutch masters, by means of glazes, intent on the sequence of the colour he had taken as his point of departure. The contrasts he introduced could be added gradually, just as a river may be enlivened by boats, shadow by points of light, a luminous passage by dark details. The process had the advantage of never miscarrying altogether, and of making the result dependent on diligent execution. It had the disadvantage of being too slow for instantaneous impressions, of keeping the painter at a distance from his model, and of forcing him to a manual rendering of detail. Techniques are differentiated by the degree of their demands on the painter's concentration. Those rank highest which demand most from the conception of the mind and least from the execution on the canvas. The most difficult are those which are the least specific, the least technical, which depend least on manual dexterity, and seem to make the picture grow of itself. These, too, are the only modern methods, because they alone correspond to the given multiplicity of Nature, in contrast to those of earlier epochs, when the limited

task still allowed and necessitated a specific technique. Whistler's danger lay in the disproportion of his form to his modernism. A rapid intelligence like his must have lost patience over a technique entailing so much manual labour, and then have been forced to put up with the defects of the method.

Battersea Bridge is the apogee of his landscape painting. *Sea and Rain*, the charming sea-piece of the same year in the Young collection, with its amber sea and rich-toned blue-white sky, show already how the painter was seeking to help himself. The forms are much more fluid than before ; they float in the vaporous atmosphere, and so the colour has become richer. The comparatively strongly coloured but very tender material makes the laborious gradation unnecessary. Instead of starting from a precise foreground with strongly defined forms and running through the whole gamut of tones, Whistler took a vaporous consistency as the basis, thereby minimising all the differentiation. By this process he produced perfectly artistic effects in *Sea and Rain* and a few other pictures of the same time without any perceptible loss of variety. The slight remaining distance is divided with all the greater finesse, and suffices to suggest the animation of Nature. The reproduction shows the most delicate motions of the atmosphere, and where the state of existence represented becomes nebulous it still remains an organic form. It is easy to see that, without the tonic of a painful artistic rectitude, one might speedily arrive at degeneration of the natural pictorial instinct on this road. I will not say at a non-pictorial method. The conception of the picturesque embraces a thousand degrees, and is notoriously applicable to many works which are not painted at all. We apply the term indifferently to a house, to the corner of an old street, to the furrowed face of a bearded old man, &c. No dilettante with any touch of artistic gift paints a picture in which a certain degree of picturesqueness may not be discerned. But in art all qualities have a practicable sense only when they exist as (relative) maxima. A picture which does not approach the extreme of beauty at which it aims is not merely rather less beautiful than it should be, but worthless, as meaningless as a sheet of blank paper. There are not two arts, but one only. This ideal and sole rational definition does not take completion into consideration, but reckons with the aspiration of the man who wields the brush. We do not judge by what an artist does, but by what he aims at doing, and examine the result only when this is determined. Nay, if an artist even succeeds in conveying his high purpose definitely he has accomplished his task. We are less concerned to see what Whistler could do, for which we have no safe and just standard, than what he wanted to do.

Whistler's aspirations as a landscape painter gradually weakened after the pictures of 1865, without even an effort towards rehabilitation. The *Nocturne in Blue and Green*, the Thames with the view of Chelsea and the solitary figure on the right, may serve as type for the continuation of the sea-pieces above mentioned. The painting is confined to a tasteful colouristic schema and the indication of outlines. The water still reveals an attempt to suggest a certain material. Subsequent works, such as the *Arrangement in Gray and Gold*, with Battersea Bridge, in Mrs. Flower's collection, or the famous *Nocturne in Blue and Silver*, with the pilaster of the bridge, are only so far painting that they were executed with a paint-brush. Even of this fact we can only be sure after minute investigation.

On the other hand, these things are not without charm, and even certain relations to Nature, and many of them show a highly cultivated taste. Only the higher aspiration of the painter is needed to make them works of art. Whistler became the painter of the London atmosphere, of the dimness of night. No one

can say that he did not paint realities, and against the sceptic to whom such negative arguments do not make the works more palatable it might be urged that he demands more from the painter than Nature offers to the eye in the given example. And does not Whistler give more? Not materially, of course. That would be falsehood. But spiritually? Who ever walks on the banks of the Thames in Chelsea or Hammersmith on a misty evening without thinking of him? Even memory, the eager handmaid of all enjoyment, rebukes the sceptic. There are many persons who think Whistler's fog truer than the fog of the London streets, so well has he suggested the impalpable. The thoughts which the ideal inspires are rarely vouchsafed us by crude reality. The artist, says experience, should conquer Nature, should stamp the image of the cosmos upon his Nature. If I choose Nature in her weaker manifestations, said Whistler, I shall conquer her more easily. He chose her so small that nothing remains of her but a nebulous veil. But did he even conquer this minimum of a shrouded Nature? He did not use it, but reproduced it as faithfully as he could. He did not paint atmosphere in order to give the things in it richer planes, greater reality, but for its own sake. "Whistler," writes Kessler, "does not express night by antithesis, by a contrasting appearance of light, but by itself, through its characteristic tones and harmonies. He paints that dark basis of its tone, the mysterious quality proper to even the lightest night. He shows all colours dissolved in brightness, in the gradations of a pale, shimmering tint. He gives the softness of forms without contours, the tenderness of the movement of light as it pulses through sleeping Nature. Where a bright gleam, a colour, the red sparks of a firework, fall across the blue night, it is there merely as a superfluity. Whistler does not need these objects." *

Is he then a magician, a genius without a peer, who puts Rembrandt and Velazquez in the shade, an artist who creates his cosmos out of nothing, a painter who paints without painting? Is there then an art which can represent night without antithesis, without any contrasting appearance of light, but nevertheless by the special character of its tones and harmonies? If so, night is blackness in itself, and mist is grayness in itself, and it is enough to lay these colours alone with proper feeling upon the canvas. A pall becomes the symbol of night, and a well-prepared gray enshrines all the secrets of atmosphere. And, indeed, the enthusiasm of the master's worshippers does not stick at this. "Ce n'est ni le crépuscule ni la nuit," writes Mauclair; "c'est l'ombre en soi-même, un élément distinct des heures, et où se déroule une existence qui n'est point la vie ordinaire . . ."† And Bénédite takes up the strain: "Apparences! illusions! c'est la grande chimère et la grande poésie de la nuit elle-même. D'autres avant lui avaient aimé l'ombre pour faire valoir la lumière; lui a aimé l'ombre pour l'ombre et la nuit pour la nuit. . . ." ‡

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In the year 1878, in the brightest of the months, when the sun was shining one day convincingly into his Tusculum, Ruskin, still hale and vigorous, rose up against the painter of nocturnes, and wrote the historic phrases touching the artist who did not hesitate even at intentional fraud, of the "coxcomb" who asked two hundred guineas "for throwing a pot of paint in the face of the public." § Six months later the famous lawsuit took place.

* In "Kunst and Künstler," *loc. cit.* above.

† "De Watteau à Whistler," p. 310 (Fasquelle, Paris, 1905). The chapter heading is in itself typical: "Whistler et le Mystère dans la Peinture."

‡ "Gazette des Beaux Arts," August 1905, p. 152.

§ In the letters to English artisans, published under the title "Fors Clavigera," under date July 2, 1878.

No dramatist could invent dramas or comedies of such subtle psychology as those with which the student of art history is constantly confronted. Whistler's lawsuit is a comedy of unusually striking effects. Ruskin, the apostle of Turner, felt himself impelled by the same reasons which led him to declare Turner the greatest genius the world had seen, to rid the earth of the coxcomb, Turner's successor! He did not appear at the trial, but even without him it was comical enough. It is difficult to imagine anything more absurd than his counsel, who threatened the jury with the evil days in store for England should their verdict deter his client in future from discriminating between beauty and ugliness, or than the ineffable Baron Huddleston, who gravely asked the clerk, when the *Battersea Bridge* was exhibited in court, which part of the picture represented the bridge; or the strange figure of the witness "Mr. Jones"—afterwards Sir Edward—who did not fail to point out certain merits in the pictures, took occasion to lay down certain definitive rules on composition in particular and form in general, and on the basis of these arguments finally pulverised the bold complainant, though preserving throughout a touch of indulgent mildness; or the complainant himself, the leading character, in reality the accused, who, with a humour worthy of a Dickens, conducted his own case, and magnificently acquiesced in the award of one farthing damages instead of £1000. An incomparable satire upon all the nonsense that has been preached for fifty years against progress was given with all the traits of reality. But the best part of it all was what gives value to all true comedy, the invisible irony; for all these hostile witnesses, who accomplished impossibilities in the way of making themselves ridiculous, were unconsciously fighting for the right, and stupidity had become the wise judge. After the trial, of course. During the comedy the most virtuous sage would hardly have ranged himself on Ruskin's side, still less when the victorious and vanquished "coxcomb" made his marginal notes on the report of the suit in "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies." *

He was neither stupid nor tragic; the traditional unpractical qualities of the artist had never oppressed him, nor was he the man to follow after chimæras. Rather the most dexterous mystifier the world has ever known. A "blagueur" in the great manner, who took no one and nothing seriously but his "blague," himself not excepted. He knew his age, understood the susceptibility of its supposed matter-of-fact mind to everything that can be looked at poetically, to the strangeness of all secrets, especially those that need no solution. When he noticed one day that harmony played a certain part in oil pictures, and forthwith began to bestow musical titles on his pictures, a new age seemed to have dawned for painting. The novelty did not fail to whet the opposition of the great public, which after the Ruskin lawsuit demanded its victims in the painter's little circle. But Whistler was man enough to present a point to the stream, and he not only continued to christen his arrangements and harmonies, but also applied the rubric retrospectively to those early works which had not profited by the master's progress in his art. Thus many a picture became a harmony without much exertion on the part of its author. And Whistler was right to bear the ill-humour of the moment calmly. The relation to music, at a time when the dream of universal peace was in the air, and the thought of a universal artistic ideal began to occupy men's minds, was a far-sighted idea that was certain to bear fruit sooner or later. Indirectly Whistler owed it to his friend Fantin, the devotee of Wagner.† Fantin

* William Heinemann, London, 1890.

† He owed the title "Nocturne" to his friend Mr. Leyland. *Cf.* the letter in the "Art Journal" of August 1892.



WHISTLER: NOCTURNE, BLUE AND SILVER
(BATTERSEA REACH)
FREER COLLECTION, DETROIT, U. S. A.



COURBET: THE BEACH, TROUVILLE (1866)
DURET COLLECTION, PARIS

never concealed his passion in conversation, and showed the advantages he derived from his delight plainly enough in his works. But whereas with him music was a strain that ran through his whole being and echoes in every picture and every stroke, an organic part of his pictorial gift, Whistler was thoroughly non-musical in this sense, and used music only to give suggestive titles to his pictures and an additional note of interest to his personality.* All that was not atmosphere, the disciple could expound as the higher music. It would be interesting to know what the sincere Fantin, who stoutly defended himself against the charge of being a musician, thought of this game.

The musical label was France's last involuntary gift. It profited Whistler more than what he had gained from his friend, the embryo master, Courbet. From Courbet, indeed, he turned away energetically. Nothing is more instructive as to the psychology of the versatile artist than his attitude to the master of Ornans, shortly after he had parted from him at Trouville. A letter to Fantin, which Bénédite dates 1867, contains the most exhaustive criticism, not only of the influence, but of its subject.

Ah, mon cher Fantin, quelle éducation je me suis donnée, ou plutôt quel manque terrible d'éducation je me sens! avec les belles qualités que je tiens de la nature, quel peintre je serais maintenant si, vaniteux et content de ses qualités je n'avais fait fi de toute autre chose! Non, vois tu, le temps où je suis venu était bien mauvais pour moi! Courbet et son influence a été dégoûtant. Ce regret que je sens et la rage et la haine même que j'ai pour cela maintenant t'étonneraient peut-être, mais voici l'explication.

And this explanation is a veritable human document:

Ce n'est pas le pauvre Courbet qui me répugne ni ses œuvres non plus. J'en reconnais, comme toujours, les qualités. Je ne me plains pas non plus de l'influence de sa peinture sur la mienne. Il n'y en a pas eu et on n'en trouvera pas dans mes toiles. Ça ne pouvait pas être autrement parce que je suis très personnel et que j'ai été riche en qualités qu'il n'avait pas et qui me suffisaient. Mais, voici pourquoi tout cela a été bien pernicieux pour moi. C'est que ce damné Réalisme faisait appel *immédiat* à ma vanité de peintre et, se moquant de toutes les traditions, criait tout haut avec l'assurance de l'ignorance: Vive la nature! La nature, mon cher, ce cri-là a été un grand malheur pour moi. Où pouvait-on trouver un apôtre plus prêt à accepter cette théorie si commode pour lui, ce calmant pour toute inquiétude? Quoi! il n'avait plus qu'à ouvrir ses yeux et peindre ce qui se trouvait devant lui, la belle nature et tout le bataclan! Ce n'était que ça? Eh bien, on allait voir! Et l'on a vu le *Piano*, la *Fille Blanche*, les Tamises, les vues de mer . . . des toiles enfin produites par un polisson qui se gonflait de vanité de pouvoir montrer aux peintres des dons splendides, des qualités qui ne demandaient qu'une éducation sévère pour faire de leur possesseur un maître au moment qu'il est, et non un écolier débauché. . . .

And he ends up with a te deum to Ingres!

In this spirit Whistler betook himself to his nocturnes.

The positive element of the musical mysteries was a very dexterous pose. It was derived neither from the Pre-Raphaelites nor the French, but was necessarily of exotic origin.

* He was, in fact, quite unmusical in the literal sense. *Cf.* Menpes' "Whistler as I knew Him" (Adam and C. Black, London, 1904), pp. 54, 56.

THE JAPANESE

The analysis of a man so simple and healthy as Constable demands the whole of our powers, because his development accomplished itself unconsciously, like the growth of a mass consisting of blood and muscle, which presents to the eye merely the indivisible unity of flesh. To examine the complexity of a being so subtle and versatile as Whistler is comparatively easy, because it does not hold together—we see the seams. He did not grow ; he combined, and happened upon a variety of things which could not blend. A synthesis may be evolved from Delacroix and Ingres, from Raphael and Titian, from Rembrandt and the antique, from the most opposite powers, in short, but Courbet and Rossetti are mutually exclusive, not because they are extremes, but because the factor called Courbet contains the manner of the other without a remainder. It is not possible to create a new body with iron and cardboard. The utmost one can do is to paste them together.

The exotic was Whistler's happiest combination, inasmuch as it suited him best, and gave the essential motive to his masquerade. It was the unhappiest, because it definitively closed the vistas of his artistic activity. His Japanesism was at once the strongest lever of his success and his greatest error. It manifested itself somewhat later than the two tendencies we have considered so far, and grew round them, becoming the cement between them and other things which were added later, and giving the artist his ultimate physiognomy.

The conquest of Japan, the jubilee of which we might now celebrate, is closely connected with Whistler. Its inception was not due to him, as has been occasionally asserted in England and Germany. The first impulse came from Bracquemond, who in the year 1856 discovered a book by Hokusai in the possession of his print engraver, Delâtre, and soon made the discovery public with great enthusiasm. Whistler was, however, one of the first collectors of Chinese and Japanese treasures. His collection of blue and white china included some fine pieces, and I remember two lacquers, which belonged to the first golden period. In his pictures Whistler has attested the momentous discovery more clearly than any other great artist of his generation. I say nothing of the little ones.

Japan entered the circle of European art at the most favourable moment possible. It helped Manet and his friends to overcome the toughness of Courbet's material and to restrain the prolixity of the landscape painters of 1830. It expanded naturalism, made the brush looser, colour more liquid, and restored the rights of the idea. We owe it an extension of the surface, a delight in lively contrasts, movement in composition, to which it gave the charms of asymmetry, and above all a new pictorial pattern. The revolt against the schema of classicism found here at once accretion and modification. The fear of a conventional contour became less acute. Drawing, which had been battling for existence since Delacroix, received new aims.

All this is to be found in the works of Manet and his comrades about the year 1860, though it is impossible to determine the exact point at which the influence began to be felt. Where we seem to trace a reflection of Japan in Manet we light upon Goya, who also helped him to a more rapid method of representation, or upon Guys, whose lightness is not surpassed by the improvisation of any Japanese

aquarellist, or upon Constable, whose sketches are sometimes strikingly akin to certain effects of the artists of Nippon. In other words, the tendencies fostered by Japan were already in operation before Hokusai and Hieroshigé were discovered. The influence merely confirmed what it found, co-operated, settled a point in questions of detail, but it had to make its account with many other tendencies in similar or opposite directions, and in the friction lost all that determined its ethnographical position. The Orient serves to make the European more occidental. Whistler plunged headlong into the gay miscellany of the wonderland, and for a time had no higher aim than to appear as exotic as possible. In 1864 and 1865 he painted Japanese scenes as faithfully as he could. The *Fille Blanche* was dressed up in gaily coloured garments, placed before a real Japanese screen, and given a Japanese fan to hold in a little hand bent geisha-fashion ; or the Japanese lady sat before another screen between little tables and lacquered boxes and contemplated the woodcuts of her native land ; or several Japanese girls in other garments stood and reclined on a balcony and gazed dreamily into space. The details were always copied from genuine specimens, for at that time Parisian industry made no provision for the wants of the island empire. But even now that our organs have become blunted to the abuse of decades the pictures reek of imitation.

It was the landscape painter who succeeded in conquering Japan. The struggle was not without its comical aspect. Whistler cast off the exotic costumes, forswore all his bibelots, and finally emerged as victor from the entanglements of literal imitations. And when in a small circle he began to be hailed as a personality and as one of the most European of painters, he had become half a Japanese.

The painter of *Battersea Bridge* discovered the schema of the Impressionists of Nippon, the amusing organisation from a low or a high point of sight with which Hieroshigé had made his astonishing effects ; he transposed Hokusai's joyous bridge perspective to the London model, and learnt the bold ornament of dots from the painters of Fushi. There is scarcely a picture in which the dainty branch does not spring up in some corner. Whistler's inventive genius accomplished an incalculable number of variations with this branch. He placed it above and below, left and right, always in some new place, and each time a new opus arose. Often the entire picture hangs on one frail twig. There are nocturnes whose whole physiognomy depends on this support and on the well-placed butterfly signature, and this physiognomy is unmistakably Japanese in type. Whistler carried out the final transition by his adoption of the flat surface. His landscapes took on an essential peculiarity of the pictorial representation of Japan, and at the same time made a proportionate sacrifice of the character of European oil painting.

His advance in imitation is obvious. The ugly difference between an exotic content and a European form disappears. There are dozens of nocturnes and the like which go so completely or to such a degree into the Japanese world of sensation that we are conscious of no disturbing remainder. And these pictures give what their author meant to give, a colour harmony, a surface agreeable to the eye, a reflection of certain aspects of Nature. If an artist has done enough when he achieves what he proposed to himself, there is nothing to be urged against Whistler.

But I protest against this axiom. Capacity remains a non-essential conception if we renounce criticism of the intention. And our reason revolts at the approximately Japanese intention of a European. It is not the idea of our heritage that forbids gravitation to Oriental aims ; it has waxed faint in the age of electicism,

and does not prevent us from hankering after many more primitive images; but logic, the law of beauty immanent in all the arts alike, the perception that we, with our European means, ought not to aim at things that satisfy Orientals because the difference of the means not only makes it impossible to accomplish them, but also sets aside the obstacles necessary to all ideal effort.

There are collectors of Japanese works of art who prefer the kakemono of a Chinese primitive to a Van Eyck, and a well-preserved print by Hokusai to a Rembrandt. Over such questions it is impossible to argue. Others would exchange the kakemono for a postage stamp of the same zone. Collectors are lunatics of a harmless kind. All artists are collectors, and, as we learn from a hundred examples of all periods, there are fanatics among them. Many neglect Constable's rule to forget all about art when creating, and the strikingly small number of masters of wealthy origin may be explained in our day, by the dilettantism which is denied to the poor. Whistler's art was obscured by his love of collecting. The vessel in which talent is refined to art was filled with his dilettantism. This outgrew the normal dimensions; few of his contemporaries appreciated delicate things as he did; but his art lost the space and power necessary to it. This defect seemed to harmonise with the character of his borrowed art. Its slight demands on personality suited his incapacity to concentrate himself. In Japanese prints we admire the development of a linear type, which unites the certainty of stenography with the grace of calligraphy. The delicate material harmonises with the slightness of the charm, and at once excludes some portion of the claims we are wont to make on painting. (I do not say European painting, for there is but one.) It is capable of embracing the harmony of objective forms together with richness of script; in other words, everything which taste can choose out of a given abundance. But subjective colour, which can only come from practice in our methods, and which we rightly rank far above the other, as yielding richer variations and as the sign of a freer art, is denied to it. The development of modern Japanese pictorial art that corresponds to our painting took place mainly in wood-engraving, and spent itself in the ideal exploitation of all the possibilities of this technique. This specifically industrial estimate of a portion of Japanese art answers to the character of the whole. The difference between a comb and a picture is confined to the materials and the destination. The European conception of art is therefore inapplicable to the creations of Japan, and it was a natural consequence that she should have been of essential service to us only in our industrial art. The individual qualities of our painting could only suffer from the contact, inasmuch as the abstraction of our artistic conception had to lose in breadth therefrom, an abstraction which has been purchased with the effort of centuries, and by the sacrifice of all the advantages inherent in a comprehensive art comparable to that of Japan. These sacrifices are without prejudice to the superiority of which I have just spoken. They resemble the beneficent loss of blood prescribed by the physician for the overheated body.

The advantages derived by Whistler from his self-surrender, which he carried further than any other of our Japanistic masters, could also only lie in the domain of industrial art; and here, indeed, he achieved irreproachable results, of which we shall speak presently. Our estimate of him is very different when we judge him as an industrial instead of a pictorial artist. Greatly as the latter was over-estimated, the former was ignored. Of course, this non-recognition was essential to Whistler,

and no one contributed more to it than himself. This, indeed, is the moral of his history. His Americanism in the manipulation of ideas, which, because they are not strongly differentiated superficially, can be easily multiplied, is a continuation of the process which Whistler began under the inspiration of Rossetti and Courbet. The compromise is less obvious because it is not based upon the tangible qualities of well-known personalities, and does not drive the spectator to criticism of the idea so quickly. The naked results of the compromise were the same. The painter cannot strengthen his pretensions by means of an art which lacks the most important premises of painting. Whistler strove with a brush and with the capacities of a brush after effects which the Japanese achieve mainly in wood-engraving. He profited for a time by the remoteness of his models. But the nearer we came to the originals—it took a long time; the trade was confined for years to a very limited circle—the less need was there, or should have been, for intermediaries, and the more easy was it to note the differences. The balance is not to Whistler's credit. Here too his brush confined itself to a weakening of the model. It is only the material detail of his tones that is richer. Even in the most diaphanous of his pictures we still recognise the separate brush-strokes, whereas in the Japanese prints the planes are only animated by the tint and by schematic effects of relief. But this particularity, which is only discoverable at times after careful examination, is in hundreds of cases merely defective covering of the surface, sometimes the result of detailing, but never of deliberate division, which obtains a system of effects embracing the whole work from the characteristic laying on of colour with the brush. The system—so far, indeed, as we can talk of system in connection with Whistler's pictures—is based on the flat ornament of the Japanese; and since it cannot rival their dexterity, since it is impossible to get that cleanness of the surface, the indispensable quality of the technique, by means of the brush, since, further, the contour lacks the richness of rhythm and the delicacy of the stroke, and must necessarily lack them, the result of the rivalry is beyond doubt.

The mistake is comprehensible to some extent when we think of a positive quality of Whistler's with which I have not yet dealt—his unquestionable talent as an engraver. He was, as Duret says, "un graveur d'instinct et de race," born an etcher, and later a most brilliant lithographer. Before he laid hold of the brush he had already made a name among his Parisian comrades with his etchings, and while as a painter he was still seeking a form in all possible directions, as an etcher he had long found a perfectly adequate expression. There are few pictures which show him to such advantage as the plates of about 1860, when he was twenty-five—very sincere renderings of Nature, renderings of Whistler himself, with all his esprit, his mobility, his love of banter, and without any of his less admirable qualities. At the same time that he was vexing his soul over the *Piano* picture he drew in a few hours the view of the Thames with the crowded houses on the bank, the swarm of boats on the river painted with the white of the paper, with the admirable boatmen in the foreground,* or set down the island of houses in the Seine from one of the windows of the Louvre,† or seized upon the types of the streets. The sheets seem to have grown of themselves. He was not thinking of art here; he wanted to do what he had done in the topographical office at Washington, when, to the horror of his chief, he had covered the borders of his maps

* *Black Lion Wharf*, dated 1859 (Wedmore's Catalogue, No. 40).
† Wedmore's Catalogue, No. 55.

with caricatures *—amuse himself with existence, see how the world could be recreated with the pencil, putting as little purpose into the process as might be. In many of the earlier etchings, especially the interiors, such as the *Vieille aux Loques*, *The Kitchen*, &c., we recognise the shadow of Rembrandt. But he does not linger here; he presses forward to something different, looser, more playful and lighter; smaller too, certainly, but free from the pettiness of the epigone.

And this impression persists if we follow the whole "œuvre gravée" to its close. There are weak plates among it, but none that challenge criticism by weakness. The impulse towards progress always comes from his own experience. Here too there is a tendency to dissolve, which was carried furthest in the lithographs; but it makes form more pliant, and does not sacrifice it. It induced Whistler to simplify detail, but to multiply all that was to be gained from the copper. Much deeper things, no doubt, have been said with the needle, but it must be admitted that no one has ever given us things so exclusively conceived for it. It is this thinking with his instrument which gives the engraver such an advantage over the painter, who with all possible technical inventions vainly seeks to bridge over the chasm between emotion and form. Whistler is as near to himself in the etchings as is the scribe to his handwriting. He wrote down his Venice, his London, his Paris in pictures. The *Doorways*, the *Balcony*, the *Garden*, are more sincere than the letters to Fantin. Never did the painter achieve the splendour of these plates. The web of tiny, imperceptibly bent strokes makes an effect like that of rich laces. Compare an etching of the piazza of St. Mark with a picture of the same. The etching records a typical impression which its means are wholly adequate to render, the peculiar breaks and apertures of the buildings, with their many arches and thousand ornaments. This it exaggerates. Whistler's etched Venice is much more ornate, the Gothic architecture far more rococo than the reality. With the sparkling filigree which repeats the objective impression in manifold variations there gradually arises not only the given object, the building, which we see clearly at the first glance, but the atmosphere which surrounds it and dissolves it again, moulding it into the fantastic image our eyes carry away of the magic city in blissful nights, in the sun-mist of noon, or in the delicate twilight of evening. The painter, however, wanted more; and who would gainsay him? For he could do more with his richer means; he could give the massiveness of structure, which the filigree of the etching could not suggest, could add to the ornament that delights us the threatening darkness that mingles awe of the invisible with our admiration for the city of the lagoons. But greatly as the possibilities of pictorial means per se surpass those of the mesh-like technique of the etchings, they are only effectual if they are made so in exactly the same way, when the painter too succeeds in weaving a net in which he captures reality. This, however, was too much for Whistler. He thought that as a painter he could seize from without the charm of Venice, which as an etcher he had caused to grow from within, and confused cause and effect. He tried to fix the atmosphere about St. Mark, and painted it as if the vaporous charm produced the building, instead of the reverse. He might as well have tried to make a rose grow out of painted perfume, and by this fantastic naturalism he only succeeded in producing a lifeless rendering of a living apparition. It was the same false conclusion which led Turner astray, and yields strikingly similar

* "The Art of J. McN. Whistler: An Appreciation," by T. R. Way and G. R. Dennis (Bell and Sons, London, 1903). *Cf.* also Duret, p. 5, and Menpes, p. 88.

results. The picture has a fantastic effect before it is formed, and is therefore swifter in its effect than the etching. It disturbs the spectator more violently, but the effect is lost as soon as he recovers from his astonishment and begins to observe. Whistler looked upon atmospheric phenomena as vapour, and therefore painted vapour. In reality, however, the atmosphere is no more ephemeral than any other piece of Nature; it is only made up of more complex dimensions than the usual ones, and a rendering which only gives the changeful appearance not only fails to suggest its nature, but by the literalness of the reproduction produces the antithesis of the model. Whistler's seductive *Nocturne, Blue and Gold*, in Mr. J. J. Cowan's collection, attempts to give the colour of the impression by means of a strange tone, which harmonises with another yet more strange. But even were the yellowish golden brown of the marble still more choice and the blue of the atmosphere yet more tender, they would still be only brown and blue, with but a slight relation one to the other, and their resemblance to the blue and yellow of reality embraces such a minute portion of the monument bathed in the evening light that one only feels the woeful difference between Nature and art.

Pride in the wealth of his manipulative means makes the artificer strong, insight into its limitations makes the artist. Whistler certainly got the maximum out of the copper. Things his pupil Menpes tells us about the printing of the etchings remind us of the meticulous care of the Japanese.* But it is just in those plates which show the utmost delicacy of treatment, such as the *Putney Bridge* or the *Upright Venice* that the free poetry soars above routine. Nocturnes which promise more than they perform are rare among the etchings. The last series of Venice etchings, published in 1886, are preceded by certain propositions for etchers, the first of which is: "Qu'en art il est criminel de vouloir aller au delà des moyens employés pour son exercice." If the *painter* had taken this axiom for his motto, he would have avoided many errors. The etcher, who had only a steel point for a brush and printing ink for colour, was a great painter, not because he effected more with his tools than others before him, but because he recognised his limits more keenly, and within the impassable boundaries produced colour and picturesqueness like an artist of unlimited means. By this pride in the riches of his poverty he was a European, the representative of the noblest capacities of our culture—a higher culture than that of the naïve children of the East, who have received too much of the gay variety of colour as a free gift to be able to evolve the highest conception of colour from their own consciousness. That this pride failed the painter so signally, that he envied the Japanese that which industrial art and a less strenuous manner of life had given them, robs his silhouette of its pure outline.

* "Whistler as I knew Him," p. 87 et seq.

THE SPANIARD

Whistler's portraits were his trump cards. His power of assimilation was in his favour here. His habit of seeing in Nature only a costume for his own moods, and his capacity for winning the appearance of a form from an impression before he had thoroughly received it, were decisive factors here again. The unrivalled juggler, who slipped into strange people before he understood their language, and trusted himself to use the idiom of things before he had grasped their nature, brought valuable qualities to the help of the portrait painter; above all that rapidity of the receptive apparatus so indispensable in our democratic age, prized since the time of Van Dyck, and expanded by Reynolds. His method was not, indeed, nearly so rapid as the old one, but it was even better suited to every face whose owner could afford the necessary outlay of time and money. The arranger who by means of a nothing succeeded in Rossetti-ising Fantin's type, with the same nothing gave a Pre-Raphaelite figure the charm of Japan and made a Japanese landscape into a view of Chelsea, had everything that the transformation artist of fashionable circles required. He was very strong in transformations. I have seen contemporaries to whom Nature had given but little aplomb, going into his studio in Fitzroy Street and, transmuted in the portrait, they have left the house as Spanish grandees. And yet they were still themselves. The characteristic manner had not effaced all their features. It was not, like the over-summary manner of the Reynolds period, a face-style. It lurked in apparently unimportant, very unobtrusive trifles, in a something, a nothing, difficult to define with a word, but attractive to sitters just because it was so discreet.

Menpes has given us some very intimate details touching the master. He shows him at his tailor's and his hairdresser's, knows the secret of the shape of his hat and of the famous long cane, describes his manner of eating and speaking, and in all these manifestations we find the same circle of "artistic conceptions," the same style. Whistler had style. He had the courage to defy the antiquated judgment of the world, which declares absorbing interest in externals to be incompatible with intellectual eminence. To that little circle in London (more especially) and in Paris who dethroned the poet from his eminence on the radiant heights of society and hailed the painter as the true artist of life, Whistler was an apostle. He even ventured to dress not only well, but with a delicate suggestion of personality, and avoided the crude antics of the Romanticists, who were not distinguished but put into a uniform by their fluttering neck-ties and oddly cut velvet jackets. There was a tailor of genius latent in him, and his painting, if I may say so, was a high, a universal tailor's art, which was not content with fashion, but sought to invent, which gave not only the costume, but all its accessories, even the deportment which best suited the sitter, even a something which suggested his higher culture. He observed the characteristics of his clients, and found the right cut for them, always in a sparkling and modish manner. Future generations will go to his pictures to see how we dressed rather than to the vulgar drawings of fashion specialists. A little more, and he had been our Moroni; and what makes him fall short of this is perhaps rather our defect than his. All that was possible to do with our materials



WHISTLER: HARMONY IN GRAY AND GREEN,
PORTRAIT OF CICELY HENRIETTA, MISS ALEXANDER
ALEXANDER COLLECTION

he did. As Kessler says, he developed the elegance of his curves from modern costume.

Even the painter as such had a certain share in these creations. His work was above all the mise en toile. In the best examples he produces an extraordinary effect. It would be difficult to seat a figure more advantageously than the *Mother* in the famous picture of the Luxembourg, or the *Carlyle* at Glasgow, or to present a little girl more charmingly than the *Miss Alexander* of Whistler's best portrait. A brilliant decorator designed the division of the wall space in all three pictures. There is exquisite invention in such details as the position of the mother's head, not just in the middle between the two framed prints, but a little to the right; the fact that of the second engraving we see only the narrow border of the frame and a tiny bit of white paper; the relation of the upper wall space to the lower part, and that of the whole wall to the masses of the portière and the floor; above all, the outline of the face and of the whole black-robed figure on the black chair against the gray background, balanced by the black of the Chinese curtain with the beautiful white-flecked pattern. The same taste governs every detail in the other two pictures. In the *Carlyle* we could not displace the little circle with the butterfly signature, or in the *Miss Alexander* the chair with its exquisite gray stuff, by a millimetre without taking away from the charm—a very distinguished charm, much more refined than the fluttering fantastry of the nocturnes, immeasurably superior to the sensuous gourmandise of the boudoir scenes, rare enough to justify the prestige of the proverbial taste. In spite of this, the pictures not only failed to please at first, but were considered hideous. Duret relates that the little miss was ashamed to be recognised as the original. Painted in 1874, this picture, as well as the *Carlyle*, were first generally acclaimed some ten years later, when they were exhibited at the Salon. The portrait of the *Mother*, painted in 1871, had had even a longer probation before it made the final conquest of the public in the Salon of 1883. This seems incomprehensible to us now. That unusual things require time we learn on every page of art history, and we are so familiar with this experience, and know the reasons for it so well, that the fate of a Constable seems quite natural to us. The uses of such geniuses are not evident to the multitude, and thus they have themselves to pay for the superfluity of their gifts. Fame was not so long denied to Whistler; but it surprises us more to find that it was withheld so long than that it was altogether refused to Manet. For these pictures paint an ideal which is at least sympathetic to every cultivated person in the present. Who would not wish to have about him the atmosphere of the aristocratic old lady, of the quiet thinker, or of the delightful little girl? Every one who has any sort of sentiment for refinement of surroundings must have recognised in these pictures a material progress not only of an individual kind, but of universal utilitarian value, which, it might have been supposed, would have raised Whistler to the pinnacle proper to him. And this would have been only fair, for posterity will pay no homage to this art. For even here, where he offers us the utmost of which his art is capable, making his admirers wonder whether Velazquez himself reached such heights, Whistler does not actually produce himself, but makes us produce for him. Not so nonchalantly as in his nocturnes; he exerted himself honestly; but it was again upon an image created by the external world, not by the "ingenium" of the artist himself. He would be blind who could not see the pleasant quality of the colour and the drawing; but this colour and this drawing belong not to Whistler the painter, but to the dexterous

arranger who is only making use of the painter to reproduce his inventions. The invention inheres in the reality; colour and form are objective facts, external to the frame. The effect of the mother might be got in all essentials by a real figure against a real wall. The masterpiece, on the contrary, proclaims its beauty before we know what it represents in detail, and therefore retains it even after we have discovered the superficial meaning; it is only afterwards that this meaning brings about an enlargement of the elementary nature. Whistler's picture, on the other hand, lacks the elementary, and should we try to call it up, without making use of reproduction, we should inevitably come to think the drawing weak and the material crude, because the constituents are only logically and not organically combined. In the case of the *Carlyle* one would need to demand little indeed from a work of art to accept the weaknesses of the picture. The coat, the cloak, the hat, the whole artistic structure of folds seems to have been built up only for the purpose of throwing original shadows on the wall, and it makes us uneasy to find a further dimension suggested in this Japanesque silhouette art. The body becomes a kind of flat ornament through its exclusive relation to the wall; and as Whistler was not content with the natural conditions of this form, crass differences arise between the various parts—between the treatment of the coat and of the head, notably in the hair. No less disturbing is the false relation of the body to the wall. The detailed painting of the features, which, as Bénédite has said, have the gravity of a medal, demands much more precision in the treatment of the wall. The values of the wall are very delicate, but the portrait, for which they should serve as an effective background, calls them in question.

The *Miss Alexander* is on a much higher level. When English collectors brought together the gems of child portraiture for the Fair Children Exhibition of 1895 the little lady asserted herself victoriously amongst many famous masterpieces. The intensely modern, white-gray dress threw all the finery of the old English masters into the shade. Their much-praised grace looked coarse and obtrusive beside it. Reynolds' numerous children had not an atom of its natural childish dignity, and Lawrence's fluent sketch, one of his most surprising ideas, had none of its distinction among its surprises. Its reality was the amazing thing about it. The truth not only of the portrayer, but of the portrayed. The whole nature of the little maiden seemed different from that of the children of a hundred years ago. We divine the soul of the modern child, to whom the capital soon teaches a certain gravity of demeanour, who can scarcely find space to play, and yet is still young. More girl than child, more lady than girl, and yet still childish, a brilliant paraphrase of all we can think of as perfection in a child. The frock is a dream. The white of the muslin and the various grays, the dull green of the sash and the black of the shoes, make an ideal setting for the slender figure, with its small face enframed in cloudy hair. And just as the clothes suit the little lady, so does she harmonise with the green carpet and the discreet pattern and the gray wall with the gray-black skirting-board. A princess! We may rank the work that dignity and taste have created here very highly and bestow all kinds of praise upon it, save one—the eulogy which is always heard before this picture—its likeness to Velazquez. This is not a blasphemy against the great Spaniard, but against him whom it is intended to honour. But we cannot pass over the comparison. Not only does Whistler's prestige, which has been nourished on it for decades, evoke it, but the manner of this and of many other pictures the use of colours,

which bear no accidental resemblance to those of the Infantas, the echoes of effects with which we have become familiar since Velazquez.

Velazquez too decked his queens and princesses and princes sumptuously, and they are so fascinating to us in their splendour that every detail of the pictures is made a merit in the painter. Yet it would never occur to any one to call the creator of these pictures a glorious tailor. For we see too plainly that the adornment of these persons lies not only in their costumes. The Vienna Infanta is a huge round bonbon-box, in which is set a tight-laced child. The one in the Prado with the handkerchief is considerably broader than she is long. Set before us as a reality, this apparatus would move us to laughter or to tears of pity, and the painter who drew the outline of his Venus' hip must have endured tortures when he was condemned to paint persons who were robbed of nearly all semblance of human form by Court dress. If he succeeded in making miracles of art of them in spite of their clothes, it was because he transported the given object into a new world, where costume as such lost its significance. We cannot say that he altered anything in it. He gave just what he saw. But if there were a hundred proofs that the portraits did not agree with the originals, we should still believe in their likeness. Velazquez added nothing real to the real. We cannot even credit him with any special dexterity in arrangement, or he would hardly have made his *Meniñas* into the "facsimile of an accidental moment," as Justi says. And if this disposition of the figures, scarcely intelligible at a first glance, appears to us like life itself, this is not due to the strange milieu, but to the art of the painter. What he invented was not what reality gives or can give, but the transposition of the given object into the métier of the painter. He discovered qualities in his objects which only the brush can represent, and confined himself to these peculiarities, the only ones accessible to their painter's means.

These were phenomena of light and air, not emanating from the persons or things to be represented, but merely making use of these as accidental points of support. And it is because we perceive these things better in pictures than in reality, when our consciousness sleeps and our vision only embraces a part of the organs of perception, when we hear, smell, and touch more than we see, that pictorial exaggeration of the perceptible adds strength to Nature.

The light Velazquez gives us is stronger than that of the sun, because it fulfils the finite purpose of its creator more absolutely than the sun can fulfil the infinity of its purposes. It is this light we enjoy when we admire the pictures of Velazquez, the wealth of a system of immense extent, not the haughty bearing of the king, the gallant little Don Balthazar Carlos on his prancing horse, or the taste of the weavers of Mariana's rich brocades. And so perhaps it is too much to say that the great Spaniard's artist-eye was offended by the structures which encased the Infantas. It may be that he delighted in them as in the contorted bodies of Philip's dwarfs or the horrible mask of the idiot of Coria, because their forms offered a rich field for the play of light. He triumphed over our shifting conceptions of beauty and ugliness by laying the stamp of his own norm upon them.

But Whistler has no norm on the basis of the painter. What he offers instead is of lower origin, it is Nature, because it is not purged of the accidental, because it is not natural according to a higher system. The reminiscences of primitive possibilities in his pictures are too strong not to kindle the looked-for associations in the

mind of the spectator; but these only point to the reality, as we can imagine it, not to the representation of a form that enhances, secures, and immortalises. Even the *Miss Alexander* is no exception. The picture is less displeasing than others, because it has not the comparative defects of the rest. But there is nothing positive in this superiority, nothing which could give Whistler a place anywhere near the great Spaniard.

The portrait of *Sarasate*, *The Fur Jacket*, and *Lady Archibald Campbell* are about on the same level, accomplished productions, which do not, however, rival the taste in arrangement of the three best portraits.

In 1877 he painted Irving as Philip II.—black upon black, a scheme he used for a whole series of similar male portraits. It was of these Stevenson was thinking when he recalled Whistler's figures before the *Philosophers* in the Prado.* After this it only remained for Ruskin to declare Velazquez a dauber beside Whistler! He who sees affinities between the *Menippus* and Whistler's sombre reflections is incapable of forming an opinion of Velazquez. The fact that such a criticism did not debar its author from writing a book on the Spaniard full of very just observations, shows the elasticity of our art conceptions and of our art language in an amusing light.

It is not Whistler we have to thank for a revelation of the master of *Las Meniñas*. He did all he could to withhold us from him. He treated him as Turner had treated Claude, and as Reynolds had treated Rembrandt. Manet's relation to Velazquez was very different—more reverent, yet less platonic, and above more fruitful. Manet grasped sturdily at all he needed from the Spaniards, his racial affinity to them enabling him to seize their essential quality. I have shown elsewhere how gradually his individuality resolved itself into crystals of increasing purity, and how race was finally merged in a new personality. Whistler, lacking all inward relation to the conditions of a Velazquez, could take nothing from the Spaniard, much as he sought to absorb. He confined himself to turning over his work like a careful collector. He concealed his Spanish inspiration as discreetly as Manet proclaimed it openly, veiling it under decorative arts, under masquerades, under the culture of a European æsthete. But in the process he concealed what the work of art must proclaim as openly as possible, if it is to affirm its nature. Whistler clothed his people. Manet showed them naked. Every line plays and makes its effect in the nervous structure of his works, like the muscles in the body of a wrestler. There is no portion of idle flesh, no movement without its significance, no spot that does not correspond to the organism of the whole. The absurd axiom with which Whistler led off his contradictory "Propositions" for painters—"A picture is finished when all trace of the means employed has disappeared"—turns against himself, confirming what his pictures proclaim.† A finely treated surface is not in itself a work of art, and what Whistler calls the traces of work are the organs of the picture. The idea of suppressing them could only have occurred to a man who saw in painting a makeshift for the reproduction of realities. If the strokes of the brush were imperceptible in the portrait of Pope Innocent in the Doria Gallery, it might be anything else, but it would not be the glorious Velazquez. And yet the astonished Italians were right when they exclaimed, "Pare sporcati cosi a caso!"—"Made out

* "Velazquez," Robert M. Stevenson.

† The programme he constantly proclaimed is set forth officially in the document that used to hang in his art-school in Paris.



WHISTLER: ARRANGEMENT IN FLESH COLOUR AND BLACK, PORTRAIT OF MONSIEUR DURET (1883)

DURET COLLECTION, PARIS

of nothing, and there it is!" We may say the same of Manet's portraits, of some, indeed, even more justly, and we ought to be able to say it of all works that claim to be great. It could not be applied to any portrait of Whistler's.

The Irving was painted shortly after Manet's *Faure as Hamlet*, and was exhibited in London in 1877, the year in which Manet's picture appeared at the Salon. We may safely conclude that the coincidence was no mere accident: certain details in the Irving even betray Manet's influence plainly enough. Whistler has made his actor more elegant. Nothing could be happier than the gray tights and the black velvet, with its yellow binding. But Irving really looked even more magnificent in the costume, and was, in addition, a great actor. Whistler's picture does not act; it stands still—a clothes-stand! The vigour of Manet's *Faure* has something of Shakespeare himself.

Whistler interrupted the series of male portraits against black backgrounds in 1883 with his *Duret*, whom he set against a soft gray ground shot with pink. Blanche, Gandara, and the Scotch painters who follow in Whistler's footsteps never succeed in giving Whistler's rich material to their backgrounds. The black of the dress-coat, the delicate pink of the domino and the flesh tones, which seem to bloom from the background, and the different whites of gloves and linen make a beautiful harmony with the gray. The choice of colour would be perfect but for the vermilion of the fan. The picture is painted with a masterly regard to its permanent beauty. Whistler worked at it for three months, painting and repainting till he had got absolute smoothness of surface, and then veiled it with a colourless porous glaze. It offers a perfect exemplification of his theory concerning "finish." Among the few pictures Duret still owns is another portrait of himself, painted by Manet in 1868. It is hardly comparable to the other, for, as Duret has told us,* it was not intended for public inspection, and has none of the careful elaboration of the work of Whistler, who was not unmindful that the portrait was to represent him in what was then a brilliant collection. Manet painted his in two or three sittings. It is inelegant, in the well-known brown tone of the early period, the only relief a few dashes of colour in the neck-tie and the accessory still-life, and it has not stood so well as the other; yet it is far above it. With all its finish, Whistler's elaborate portrait is less complete than Manet's little picture. This is a swift, spontaneous creation, a work of the mind rather than of the hand, an invention so convincing that faulty details, did they exist in it, would seem unimportant. The other is handicraft, the outcome of industry rather than inspiration, the harmony of which is made up of so many trifles that the slightest defect, such, for instance, as the want of definition on the top of the head, irritates the spectator. The one creates life, the other an artistic illusion. Manet is "more artless," as Constable would have said. We can imagine how minutely Whistler arranged every detail of his composition. Sitting to him was a purgatorial process. The question of the costume was no slight matter in this case. Duret gives a detailed account of this part of the business; † and it is interasting to compare this with his description of his sittings to the painter of *Olympia*, of Manet's nonchalance, of how the still-life on the stool was an afterthought, although, in spite of its lack of all logical connection with the figure, it seems to bear a far closer relation to it than the domino in the Whistler, which hangs so naturally from the arm. It is difficult to believe that the two pictures

* "Histoire d'Edouard Manet," p. 117.
† Duret's "Whistler," pp. 100, 101.

represent the same person; nay, they seem hardly to belong to the same species. We note the bones and flesh in the Manet. Whistler's *Duret* stands on trousers. When Manet painted the hat he observed that "il est très facile de mettre un chapeau sur une tête, mais il est rudement difficile de mettre une tête dans un chapeau." Here we have the difference between the two in a phrase!

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Analysis brings us closer to other artists. We get a clearer idea of Rubens, of Titian, of Velazquez, of Delacroix, the more we succeed in reducing them to their constituent parts. In each part we feel the positive element the artist contributed. In dealing with Whistler we seem like a chemist always proceeding to new divisions, and perceiving, to his alarm, as the last distillation runs through the filter, that nothing is left in the cornet. The worshipper who believes in an independent Whistler body will say that the coarse texture of the paper is at fault. The exasperated chemist blames the preparation with equal energy, and declares that the metal he was seeking was non-existent, or, as the analysts say, existed only in particles. But Whistler exists. He has given us exquisite things. Who would be willing to forego the *Miss Alexander*, many a water-colour, many of the etchings and lithographs? Perhaps our experience will be that of the chemist who was searching for a metal, and after having successfully destroyed the preparation with his acids discovers that he was not dealing with a non-organic material at all. Perhaps in Whistler we have not to deal with a painter, but with another body, which has teased us, and, although it has evaporated under our fingers, remains, outside painting, but not outside of art. There is certainly nothing to urge against this hypothesis. Setting the painter aside, there is still enough over, though what remains is a very different figure from that hitherto presented by European art history. No painter of spiritual conditions and the like, not the creator of an art that gave us more by slight means than our great masters, but a "little master," an industrial artist of delicate taste, a stimulating influence which we may turn to good account. He has left us things which reflect his nature exactly; and as this was intensely modern the reflection becomes almost a symbol. In a very great epoch of painting, one which has done more for the concentration of art than any period since the seventeenth century, a personality like his, which served to modify the dominant tendency, found adequate tasks, and also very definite limitations.

I have taken him to represent the conclusion of English art, because he was connected with Rossetti, had various tendencies in common with Turner, and sometimes tried to approach Constable; because he founded a school of portraiture in which we find, in an altered form, all that we reprobate in Reynolds and his generation. He did nothing for the advancement of the best in English art, that which links Constable to Hogarth. Many nationalities met in him. Fundamentally he was, I think, most faithful to the land of his birth. This is shown in his eagerness to substitute industrial tendencies for art, the expedient of all barbaric countries. If America, the race without traditions, had brought forth a painter, it would have been an event unprecedented, and, indeed, miraculous. His exoticism, his tendency to mingle Oriental and European forms, was essentially American. His most brilliant industrial achievement, the decoration for the famous Peacock Room, has lately reached its true home. It is a better translation of Japanese art than all his nocturnes and boudoir scenes. His attention to effect was also truly American. He had no equal

in his knowledge of its mechanism. He took care that whenever and however he appeared all suggestions should contribute to the impression, preparing, completing, and even providing for the prolongation of the effect after the fall of the curtain. It is open to question whether art owed him much, but as long as the strange institution of art-exhibitions persists, his special faculty—his gift of arrangement—will hardly be rivalled.

YOUNG ENGLAND

The characteristic deficiency of England in sculpture has determined the latest developments of her art. The deficiency was cleverly concealed. For fifty years the attention of the country had been directed upon so many interests that people had no time to consider such a detail. So many new things were being produced that this ancient mode of expression was entirely thrown into the shade; there was no demand for it in England. Since the days of Gothic architecture which saw the rise of the magnificent tombs in Westminster Abbey, it had never been a popular art. The great epoch of English painting was dominated by an element essentially opposed to sculpture. The successors of Van Dyck did everything to enrich this tradition, but nothing to supplement the defect, notwithstanding Reynolds' enthusiasm for Michelangelo. Of late years, at exhibitions of the International Society over which Whistler presided, if one saw a bronze from the Continent it looked as if it had somehow strayed out of its proper environment, and almost seemed to have been chosen in order to heighten, by its coarser realism, the more tender spirit of the other works. Whistler's painting is absolutely unplastic. His best pupil, Walter Sickert, has evolved a non-plastic style which has its charm; with the Scotch school this has become a mannerism. It is this defect above all which makes the Pre-Raphaelites suffer from a comparison with Courbet. Perhaps Rossetti's circle required nothing so much as the shadow of a Donatello.

The eclecticism of the rising generation in England has not hesitated to include the French school of sculpture within the wide range of its admirations. Rodin, who has succeeded Whistler as president of the International, has long been a welcome guest by the Thames and has beneficially influenced Tweed, especially by the elegance of his portraiture. Some male busts by the young Englishman display great taste and a capacity for using the inspiration to enforce the high traditions of English portraiture. The pretty miniature sculptures of Wells are also akin to the Impressionism of the French school. These are, however, transitory and ephemeral details, promises but lately made. England remains without any school of sculpture, and to this defect all the decadence of English art may be attributed.

This defect of the English genius may seem, as such, unimportant, for the reason that there is apparently no demand for sculpture in England. Appearances, however, are deceptive. When a nation feels no necessity of this kind, its genius is the sufferer. The idea that a nation can abandon one department of art without suffering for it is a consequence of the separation of the arts from each other. The development of some one department in isolation is no less unnatural and inconceivable than the separation itself. We must conceive of artistic creation as a living body which it is impossible to lop at one end or the other without damage to its existence, or at least to its health.

Sculpture is the eldest of the arts, and we need not be surprised if it is the first to leave the scene; its departure is the beginning of the end. It was so in countries the artistic life of which is already petrified, in Italy, for instance, and afterwards in Spain. Painting cannot survive isolation. Countries which formerly attained success only in one kind of artistic production have never escaped artistic decay. It is true that the peculiar style of Dutch painting was made possible only by the absence of sculpture. A Rembrandt could only be produced by the concentration of the national genius upon painting alone. Yet it was perhaps this concentration that brought about the untimely end of Dutch art. If, on the other hand, we wish to understand the versatility which makes the greatness of the Florentines, we have only to look at any one of their pictures, their buildings or their statues. When we discover that this or that painter was also a sculptor we are not at all surprised; it is merely the verification of a conviction which we have long held. Even if Verrocchio had never produced a single monument, he would still have been a sculptor.

It is the preponderance of one or the other activity which produces the various phases in the history of art. Entire equipoise between them probably existed only in classical times. The few extant relics of the Roman frescoes astonish us by the taste shown in the recognition of what is properly pictorial. This wisdom may proceed from the same source as the capacity, never since recovered, for treating Nature within the limitation of a strict convention and yet giving it an air of perfect freedom, which is manifested in ancient stucco ornament. In such brilliant evidences of the old culture as, for instance, the slender figure of the youth with the hoop, in the upper storey of the Naples Museum, or the delicate ornament of the ceiling in the Thermæ Museum at Rome, we seem to trace a genius which still painted, carved, and built at one and the same moment with undivided energy. This organic coherence is weakened even so early as the Renaissance, and the fact is nowhere more strongly apparent than in decorations which follow the patterns of the ancients. But it survives in a relative degree, and gives personalities such as Raphael the peculiar sphere of their effects. When we reach the modern art of France, the problem becomes deeper. The plastic ideal of Ingres no less than the pictorial ideal of Delacroix speaks volumes for the versatility and the richness of the French genius. In Ingres, together with his drawing, we enjoy many charming qualities which belong to pure painting; we are conscious, in the structure of Delacroix' colour, of plastic potentialities; these assumptions are borne out in the work of their successors.

The problem takes an even more remarkable form in the Impressionist school, where even the conscious opposition of painting and sculpture cannot disturb this latent equipoise. Manet is at feud with every plastic element in painting, and tries to eliminate anything which might lead to competition with the sister art. Since shadow weakens colour he suppresses it; yet even in this reduction, the secret force of the plastic feeling springs to life. The modelling disappears from the noses and cheeks of his portraits only to make the artist's touch more powerful and comprehensive. The rejected elements are replaced by manifold resources and by a pictorial strength which is no less impressive to the eye in search of effects of perspective than the play of shadow of the earlier artists. The genius of France is declining, and the organism no longer shows the perfect harmony of a calm omnipotence. Delacroix becomes theatrical in the endeavour to snatch an effect of movement. Even so the contraction of one organ seems but to give a stronger

impetus to the other. Even in the solvent art of Manet, even in Seurat and his school, these stores of vital force are apparent in action and insist upon a use of colour which goes far beyond their scientific programme. Here the process of disruption seems barely to have begun and the artistic genius is still strong enough to produce a reaction ; some fortunate collectivist may yet be able to seize the dominant note amid these movements and countermovements and secure some sort of relative harmony.

English art is a dreary level by comparison. The so-called reaction of the Pre-Raphaelites failed chiefly for want of a starting-point, some shore from which it might strike out with a vigorous determination to reach the other side. There was no question here of any inward tension, any struggle for expression ; it was an effort to escape flaccidity and death. The genius which had nothing more to say was taught a foreign language in the vain hope that her tongue would thus be loosed.

Such attempts are like physic given to an aged man. English art, and Scottish as well, is a mere sick-room. The last attempt was made by courtesy of a grateful France through the medium of resourceful pupils of Lecoq de Boisbaudran. We have already spoken of the English episodes in Fantin's career and of Rodin's popularity in London. Cazin was there in 1871. The only man who effected anything and who is still at work after forty years' residence in England is Alphonse Legros, the comrade of Fantin, Cazin and Rodin.

Legros may have been the favourite pupil of Lecoq ; he was not the most talented, and perhaps in temperament he was the weakest ; but of them all he was the best fitted to assimilate his master's teaching, and therefore the best able to carry it to a foreign country. It was Whistler's idea ; he wished to help a friend who was having a hard struggle in France.

He can hardly have suspected that this friendly action was to raise up for him a helper in England who would supplement the influence which he himself was to exert.

Legros' talent found a readier recognition in England than in Paris. Lecoq's drill had produced a capacity for solving every problem that could present itself to an artist as completely as his temperament permits, and it was perhaps this which impaired Legros' value in the eyes of the Parisian amateur, whose artistic tastes are invariably one-sided. On the other hand the sound practical instinct of England, insisting upon a symmetrical training, found in this artist-teacher an ideal instrument.

In France Legros had passed through the development undergone by the rest of his generation. He was profoundly influenced by Courbet ; he was unable to oppose to this influence that ample sense of rhythm which preserved Fantin from becoming a mere epigone, but selected from the style of his model as much as he could control. Considered as a residuum of Courbet, Legros is weak indeed ; the *Ex Voto* in Dijon, which was painted during his French period, seems infinitely thin, both in expression and execution, when compared with the *Stone-breakers*. The picture betrays the sentimentalism which was absent in the *Funeral at Ornans*, and we divine which aspect of Legros England found it easiest to understand. In the much later pictures in the Tate Gallery the same characteristic has been even better accommodated to the English taste. Yet even here the spirit of Courbet is plainly to be seen, the spirit which divides the Frenchman from the English by such a world of difference.

The attenuation of Courbet which Legros affected resulted in a very delicately articulated draughtsmanship. Fantin had returned to the draughtsmanship of Ingres; it was the enchantment of this which supplied his art with the impulse which enabled it to escape from the world of Courbet. Legros remained faithful, but even so he got no nearer to Courbet. Many of his drawings show a similarity with those of Lecoq. When the two are compared, Lecoq, with his more slender resources, seems to contain almost more than his successor. Legros appears to dwell more on detail, though the value of his detail shrinks to nothing when we think of so great an artist in detail as Leibl. Like Leibl, Legros was helped by reminiscences of Holbein. The result was as entirely feminine as the work of Leibl is masculine in every stroke. It is a feeble and uncertain handwriting, the merest shadow of Courbet's energy. Nothing is left of that but its honesty. Legros succeeded in developing this style to unusual richness, and even produced sculpture, the most remarkable example of which is the little torso, now with other works of his in the Luxembourg. Bénédite exaggerates when he puts this work on the level of the antique.* It is primarily a linear figure, like those of the ancients but very different in intention; the form is as empty as that of the ancients was full, but it is the handiwork of an artist who seems to find in this very emptiness a means of art. His medals were more within his reach, and Roger Marx' praise of his grasp of this format is well justified. † In my opinion he is at his best in his few decorative sculptures—for instance, the beautifully composed fountains for the Duke of Portland, where the softness of Prud'hon's forms awakes to new life, a renaissance which is a portent in the land of Hogarth.

Legros became the teacher of the present artistic generation in England; in expounding his theories he had at command the same eloquence with which Lecoq had once awakened the enthusiasm of his pupils. The only material difference was the fact that his listeners were English. The question whether Legros was the best man to inspire the so-called realism of the Pre-Raphaelites with the spirit of Courbet is beside the mark. In any case the effort came too late, and if we strike a balance we shall find that Legros probably lost more than the Englishmen gained The exhibition of his later pictures at Bing's in 1898 clearly showed that the painter's powers were failing. His English environment is driving him more and more to drawing and etching. For years past he has ceased to count as a painter, but he has done more than any other man to continue the beneficial influence of Méryon upon modern England and to enrich the art of engraving, the only department where England is still supreme.

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Most of the young Englishmen who are not members of the Morris School, of which we shall speak later, make use of Legros' line. William Strang most nearly approaches the master, and among younger men the pupils of Legros are numberless. As far as draughtsmanship is concerned, be it understood; but they all paint, and as painters there seems to be no bond of union between them. This anomaly is highly disturbing to the onlooker; there is nothing which seems to connect the drawings and the pictures of these artists. When one looks at the drawings,

* In an article in the "Studio" for June 1903, which contains fine illustrations of the artist's decorative sculpture for the Duke of Portland's fountains.

† In the "Revue Encyclopédique" for December 10, 1898, with illustrations. This essay is full of original information on the subject of Legros.

one completely fails to picture to one's self the kind of painting which would naturally belong to them. One conjectures that this is an art which has given up painting and is profoundly astonished to find in the exhibitions of the New English Art Club a collection of every imaginable kind of painting. There is a little of Monet and Degas, a little of Carrière, a trace of the Pre-Raphaelites and even of those continental painters who were formerly influenced by the English school and are now reacting upon it ; something is to be found of Whistler, and, in short, of every conceivable personality, including Matthys Maris, the idol of the English, the eccentric Dutchman, who does what he can to raise Scottish mannerism to a heroic plane.

The painting is neither good nor bad, it is simply nothing. The eye passes over it without pleasure or dissatisfaction ; we seem to be hearing polite phrases which we accept without heeding. If there could be a kind of painting which was culture and yet was not art, we should have it here. One feels that one is meeting clever painters who are so unfortunate as to be unable to paint.

Everything is explicable, even this tragedy. This young generation has grown up under the eye of Burne-Jones and his friends.

The personal eminence of the Pre-Raphaelites, who were without exception men of much distinction, forced the young men to take their elders seriously ; in order to do this they had to follow Burne-Jones' train of thought, which dealt with literature, æsthetic theories, and all sorts of fine things. Any deficiency in a picture was supplied by the eye of the individual beholder, who required all the resources of culture and refinement not to notice or to betray in conversation any shortcomings in the treatment of the subject.

Reynolds once told his pupils that the cultivated taste which can appreciate every beauty in a masterpiece was almost equivalent to the power of creating masterpieces ; this was a portentous piece of folly and the kind of training it implies has borne its fruit. The young artists of London are men of the highest culture, more learned than many an expert, and are able to utter well expressed truths upon the most recondite subjects. They pursue art, wherever it appears, as eagerly as the youths of other lands run after a pretty woman. The vast city, every corner of which hides some rare treasure, gratifies their inclinations completely. London has the best museums in the world and the private collections are unique. The public and private artistic agencies give every year, almost every day, exhibitions of the choicest nature, which are enough to drive any lover of art out of his senses if he is not strong against temptation. The rising generation moreover, became conscious of the one-sidedness of the Rossetti school and conceived a longing to make the acquaintance of Continental art, even of that which came after the Quattrocento. A receptivity so wide as that of these artists is inconceivable in the most broad-minded of Continental painters. The brutal one-sidedness, the finer shades of which even a Degas cannot quite disown, and which occasionally appears in the maturest and most serene minds, has here given place to an all-pervading, all-comprehending passion for beauty. To hear these men talk is almost as enjoyable as to see the pictures of the others. Daumier has no more secrets for them than has Fra Angelico, the favourite of the older generation, and Fragonard is as familiar to them as the latest French artist. They are so perfectly acquainted with all traditions that they have failed to discover a tradition of their own. None the less they are English in effect, though their nationalism has a purely negative savour. They are all afraid of that gay impulsiveness

which is the essence of artistic production, and in their efforts to avoid anything out of harmony with their culture they achieve nothing.

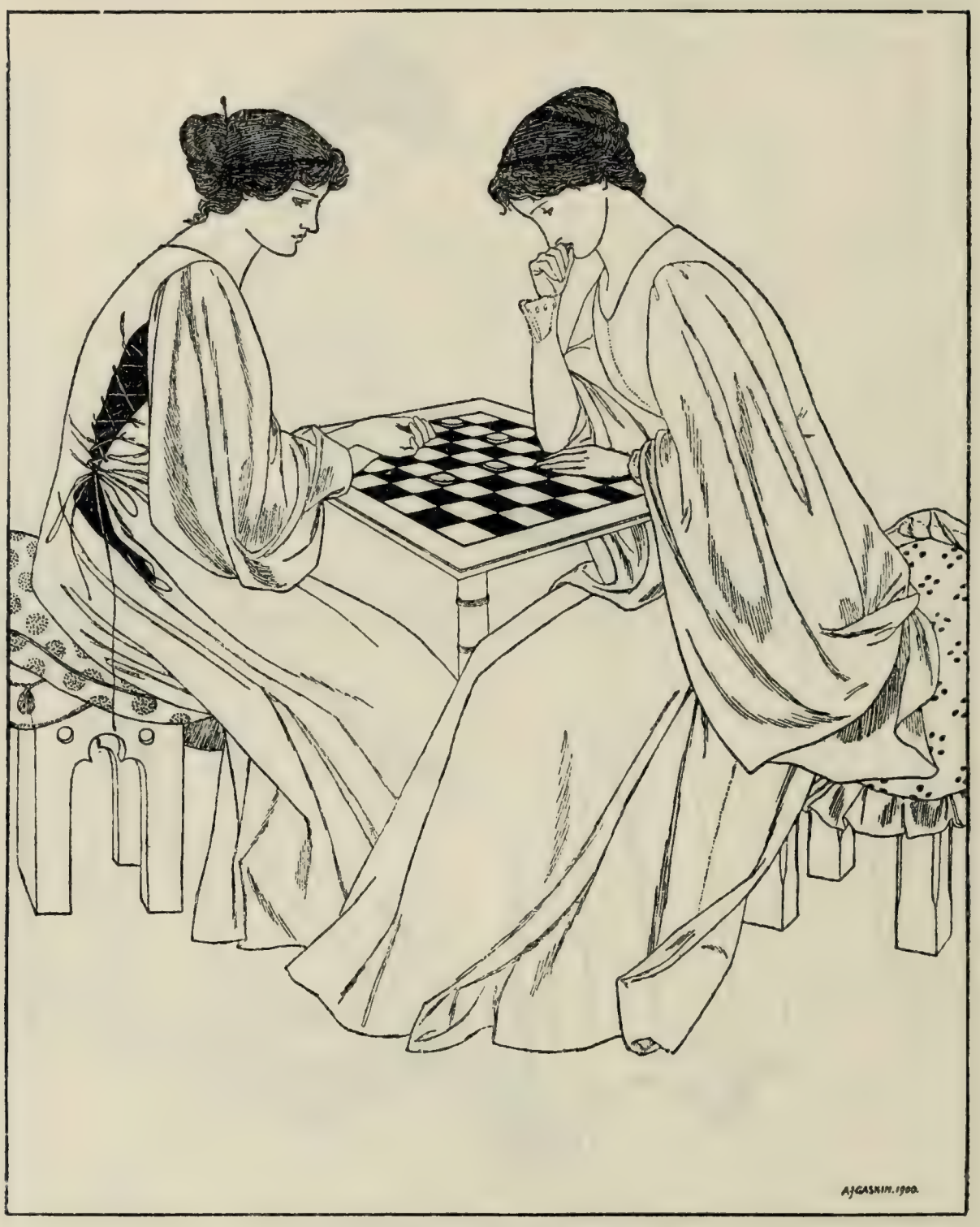
"We understand the art of making pictures," said one of them to me, with some irony; "our painting is picture-manufacture brought to perfection." Even this, however, is too high a claim. Their pictures suffer from primitive defects which any Montmartre student could avoid. Their painting has no body; they paint as people conceive painting should be and not as it is; their drawing alone has technical structure. C. H. Shannon and Ricketts, the two inseparables, have for many years been producing a series of plates. Shannon's are soft lithographs which recall Carrière, but do not possess the Frenchman's breadth; Ricketts produces brilliant arabesques on wood in which, by the intermixture of almost every traditional arrangement of line, he contrives to strike a personal note. These drawings are in entire harmony with their mode of life, with their house and its rare things, and with the fascinating, impenetrable distinction of their talk. But when one stands before their pictures one receives a sudden shock. The refinement of their nature leaves no trace there, and the spectator feels that he has been deluded. The mystic twilight of drawing, language and gesture issues in unmeaning sentimentalism, brutal in its insignificance, marked not by the softness of poetry but by the flabbiness of the mollusc; this is not the tender dialogue of subtle sensations, but the disconnected prattle of a disordered imagination. Ricketts has still a fragment of personal form, the sole consolation for his utter failure as a colourist; Shannon is becoming academic to no better purpose than Sir Frederic Leighton; at times even the organised commonplace of Leighton seems superior to his work. In the New English Art Club, the leading figure at the present moment seems to be Augustus E. John, who draws gipsy heads well. I saw a book of his in the gipsy language, of which he professes to be a master, with a rich decorative design in Indian ink as frontispiece. He is the imaginative member of the group and seems at times to be a refinement on Goya. When he paints his gipsies the result is a thing which would never be admitted to a Berlin exhibition. The two Scotsmen, Muirhead Bone and D. Y. Cameron, follow Méryon's draughtsmanship. Fry has also a sense of the charm of architecture in landscape, which the English school has recorded for a century, and if he confined himself to pencil sketches and did not make large oil paintings out of them, one's appreciation of his work would be more cordial. Slight as is his mastery of painting he has a wide knowledge of the old masters, whom he restores with high intelligence. In the case of the painter MacColl, the same knowledge has found expression in literature. MacColl's written works, especially the book I have already mentioned upon nineteenth-century art, are superior to his pictures. W. Rothenstein, than whom no one has a better knowledge of English collections, and who is acquainted with every Continental movement, has lithographed a gallery of famous artists. His pictures never get beyond a certain agreeable emptiness. In the New English Art Club I saw a clever piece of decorative work by Wilson Steer, a rendering in gay and pleasant colour, of the French eighteenth century. William Orpen and Henry Tonks are prominent members of the Club, as was also the late C. W. Furse.

It is with a sense of deep depression that one leaves an environment such as this. In Berlin or Munich or Vienna, there are no doubt many exhibitions which rouse one's anger more, but it is healthy anger which may find a happy issue in future achievements. But here we stand as it were paralysed, powerless even to conceive

of any issue. The artistic aspirations of all these earnest persons are unquestionably lofty; it would be impossible to treat them with disrespect. It is with an effort that one subordinates personal appreciation to æsthetic condemnation. And yet one is glad to leave them and to see the cheerful sunbeams which these unfortunates can only behold through a thousand prisms. This generation is like a tiny brook, the levels of which have been altered artificially in the hope of making a broad river, with the result that the stream has run dry. Nothing is wanting except matter. The brook is just deep enough to contain charming ideas. People sit comfortably on the bank and fish for them, yet strangely enough no one has ever seriously entertained the idea of using the stream for new purposes. They are content with it and it would be impious to disturb this resignation. But the solemn prestige of their forerunners calls for more vigorous denunciation. The Pre-Raphaelites are to blame for the defects of the modern English artists who are not satisfied merely to design furniture. These latter-day artists have to thank their predecessors for the fact that they have been forced to go to the Continent to learn what has become of Turner and Constable. England is now among the mightiest of nations, she possesses wealth in plenty to buy works of art; she has produced the very men which modern art requires if it is to come by its own. If proud Albion should be the first nation to experience the tragedy of abandonment by the light of art, the Pre-Raphaelites will be responsible. It may, however, be that even these misguided men were but the instruments of higher powers. It may have been written in the stars that here, too, the march of culture from east to west should manifest its mysterious problem, leaving old and effete elements to perish, and bringing forth the new that make for progress.



A. J. GASKIN. DRAWING.



A. J. GASKIN. DRAWING.

MORRIS AND HIS CIRCLE

> "I love art and I love history; but it is living art and living history that I love."
>
> W. Morris.

English manufactures have compensated for the decay of English art. The Renaissance, which failed miserably in painting, was here successful beyond all expectation. Scepticism may press for a premature answer to the question how it is that a decaying art has been able to produce such many-sided results, and may draw unjustifiable conclusions from the lack of response; the fact of successful achievement is so unquestionable that any theoretical depreciation of it would seem merely ill-natured. The story of it is, indeed, one of the most delightful chapters in the history of modern art. The underlying problem is one of the most complicated of our generation; for while it obliges us to appreciate England's progress in this respect, it also suggests the possibility of finding an issue from the labyrinth into which the decay of art drives nations from time to time.

The theory which the author has so constantly combated that art and manufacture are separate things, finds an apparent confirmation in the history of the English movement, in the course of which a partition was made which seems in accordance with this view. It is a theory which we must at any rate accept for the moment. Though we entirely endorse the æsthetic principle of the unity of all art, none the less must we recognise the fact that this necessary unity was by no means apparent at an earlier date; our fathers were quite undisturbed when one department overshadowed another; manufacture reached a stage of neglect from which the smallest trace of artistic influence, if guided by a little logic and moderation, could have saved it. The defective organisation to which is due the weakness of the Pre-Raphaelite pictures was of course an equal bar to the construction of houses in accordance with the prescribed formulæ—"Pre-Raphaelite" houses, let us say. Yet we are confronted by the phenomenon that the very people whose pictures were but weak and wandering phrase-making, whose sculpture was utterly formless, whose literature lived upon archaism, none the less dwelt without complaint in houses which we must allow to be sensible constructions in accordance with the needs of their age.

The explanation is that these people did not build their own houses. The industrial movement, erroneously ascribed to the Pre-Raphaelites, is in fact of much earlier origin. To trace its source, we must follow the history of modern Gothic architecture in England, which had erected a national monument in the Houses of Parliament in the heart of London before the first Pre-Raphaelites began their career. The transformation of this formal Gothic was not their work. There remained for them only the task of house decoration, and their co-operation, far from changing the spirit of English architecture, merely conferred an advantage upon themselves. Thus we observe two tendencies in which modern England is expressed. The fact that these tendencies met and were successfully

amalgamated at certain points is due to the work of one man, the representative of ancient England, William Morris,

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Kelmscott House, where Morris printed his books in later days, is a pretty old-fashioned house with a green garden in front, situated on the Thames at Hammersmith. The hand press with its great wheel stood in a narrow room on the ground floor, and the proof sheets were read in the first storey. It was here that I made Morris' acquaintance in the early nineties. While I admired the brilliant black arabesques, upon the large printed sheets which lay before him, he talked about his anarchism. I could not read the sheets with much ease nor could I quite understand what he was saying, but it was all very beautiful. Morris was one of those men whose personality is more convincing than their arguments. Nearly opposite stood the house of Cobden-Sanderson, where the books were bound and decorated with costly tooling for such as could pay. Here also at times violent anarchical theories were canvassed ; the mild-mannered man whose tools conjured a veritable lacework of gold upon the volumes and tastefully apportioned the colouring of his exquisite mosaics, seemed even more energetic in his idealism than his friend, the Old English master. But even the anarchism, which was originally in close connection with the æsthetic theories of the group, finally resolved itself into a delicate arabesque too. Bombs were replaced by books, more or less well written and always magnificently printed, which were boldly cast before the respectful multitude and were at once gathered up by collectors.

The most tangible part of the revolutionary ideas which Morris, Crane, Cobden-Sanderson and others professed at Socialist meetings in England and sometimes even abroad, dealt not so much with the material improvement of the conditions of labour as with the desirability of dignifying the labourer's position and especially his work. The enthusiasm of these idealists could not appreciate the vast complexities of the social problem and hardly touched the main mass of the workers affected ; but they were able to carry out their ideas within a small but conspicuous field. Morris introduced a moral element into the treatment of material which proved more effective than any æsthetic rules ; as a matter of principle as well as of art, he demanded that material should be properly treated, and rejected the modern adulterative processes as immoral. The immediate result was that many artists exchanged the brush for the tools of industry and thus the number of starving painters decreased. Of course hardly a painter or sculptor who was tolerably satisfied with his productions was willing to resign his ambitions ; but people were found who, while unable to produce good pictures or sculpture, displayed surprising talent in the service of industrial art.

The explanation is simple. In abstract art these men had piously shrunk from every rational method of presentation and, even when they possessed talent, had done their best to be not merely painters or sculptors but also the exponents of a higher calling ; in industry they were ready to follow a sound and logical principle which demanded no more than they could give. This principle Morris, both as a literary man and as an artist, had discovered in Gothic, the traditional style of the country. It was in 1858, a year of importance for the English movement, that he published, at the age of twenty-four, the book to which we have already referred, " The Defence of Guinevere," which was dedicated to Rossetti. As William Scott observed, it showed the mediæval spirit in a new light, and it was welcomed by Pater as the first typical example of æsthetic poetry.

Morris became the most determined champion of the romanticism inspired by the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer. This movement in the direction of the Gothic spirit was at first entirely literary, and indeed the original impulse can be traced directly to two or three books. To the Pre-Raphaelites, the spirit of Dante, as they understood it, had appealed; but here the written word in its strictest sense became the guide. This word, however, was a stronger stimulus to the English public than the poetry of Dante. It aroused the dearest sense of patriotism, and once it had laid hold upon men's minds, its inherent power was able to secure the most manifold realisation. It was indeed inspired by a living principle which was in no way concealed by the antiquity of its dress. Every comparison with modernity urged a clearer recognition of this spirit, and for every rational mind there was a new world to discover.

Morris was not a poet of the first rank, but he was a man of rich and wide sympathies. Much is owing to the chance which denied him the specific talents for some one form of artistic expression. It was this which enabled him to retain his freedom of outlook, his delight in the simultaneous pursuit of many objects, and the resignation or the courage which permitted him to go on using the old forms. He cannot be reproached with archaism. Every development is a mixture of old and new, and is not determined by the manner of the old, which may be separated from the new by a thousand years. Archaism properly so-called is found only when ancient forms are chosen for purposes which disregard the level of contemporary attainment, interrupt the growth of the national spirit and run counter to the logic of history. Thus such men as Constable, Turner and Bonington were forgotten in the pursuit of another sort of painting which had none of the special qualities of these forerunners, a painting in which the borrowed form and not the creative power of the painter was the sole pictorial element; this was true archaism. Its achievements were capricious and purposeless; in short, as arbitrary as its name. The work of Morris, on the other hand, was necessary. His borrowings from the wealth of the ancients were not dictated by the secret misgivings of a weak man, who decks out his poverty in borrowed plumes, nor were they dictated by the despotic choice of a patron, though they were indeed misused for this purpose after the fashion of the time. The movement begun by Morris was the first uncompromising protest of a healthy mind against contemporary proletarianism, which is all-powerful, undisciplined and incapable of producing the smallest harmony. It was most important that this step should have been taken in England, the country which had outpaced all Europe in this respect, which considered industrialism the final realisation of progress, and in which the reaction of this materialism upon the intellectual life of the nation had been plainly visible in the Pre-Raphaelite generation. Art had become a mere business of accessories; ideas moved like lay figures in the pictures of the Brotherhood; the narrowmindedness with which Ruskin's lead was followed, and indeed the whole of this miserable idealism was only possible in a country abandoned to materialism.

Amidst this inartistic activity Morris appears like a Robinson Crusoe. With remarkable acuteness he recognised that certain things were of paramount necessity at this moment, harmony of form and a house in which one could live a decent life. He also recognised that discussion of this form could not become general until a sense of form had been recreated.

The one available element in the wholly materialistic progress of England, that rational common sense which needs only to become clearly conscious of the end

in order to find the right means for its attainment, was now turned triumphantly to account. The history of this episode forms an admirable counterpart to the story of English conquests. Morris conquered the new house, step by step, with extraordinary energy. He began at the beginning, and before considering the form, he created the material to be used. If Morris needed an apology this preparation of material would be ample. Nothing was more necessary. The previous tendencies of the Pre-Raphaelites, the carelessness in respect of which they were only too typical of all later efforts to form a style, their vain desire to reap without sowing, their yearning for art without drudgery, were facts recognised by this very limited painter and his ambitions were so great that he renounced all the prestige that the others had acquired in order to secure this one indispensable object. It was no mere archaism when he returned to the past in order to find genuine colours for his fabrics, a good texture for his carpets, sound technique for his glass and metal ware, for his furniture, for everything from pottery to tablecloths, things of which one may almost say that they were practically non-existent in his time. How little he was inspired by the spirit of real archaism, that is, by mere imitation, is obvious from his many energetic protests, following Ruskin, against the mania for restoration which was characteristic of the period. He considered it as indisputably wrong that irreverent hands, vainly attempting to improve, should be laid upon the work of the ancients, as it was natural and right to apply in practice the principles to which the ancients owed their achievements. In these principles he recognised the true method of creation. In one of his many propagandist writings he says, that he will use every faculty which he possesses, and that he is resolved to avoid shoddy as far as in him lies.

He kept his word. In all his work no feature was so prominent as the obstinate expression of his resolve to have nothing but the best. On this point he insisted as much as most manufacturers do on the necessity of producing everything of the cheapest. It may be asked whence this poet derived the determination to content himself with no compromise, whence he gained the power to discover the capacities of his material, and the instinct for the means to attain his end. It was an elementary instinct of purity. Van de Velde's comparison with the stream in which men need only plunge to gain new strength, may be taken literally when applied to Morris ; there is nothing more inspiriting than the work of this man.

Our own period would be in evil case if such a manner could not be accounted suitable to the age. What Morris did was in reality exactly what the best art of our time attempted in its own way ; he clarified and purified material and also the sense of material. The frame of mind which acknowledges an obligation to Manet, which praises Monet and his school, may admire Morris without any change of front. In his hands the deeper meaning of Turner's work and of all that Ruskin wrote under Turner's influence receives an unexpected application. If the French must be admitted to have made a better use of the English tradition than England's own painters, Morris, overleaping this abstract intermediary fulfilled the boldest demands of painting with greater certainty and success than the industry of any other country. In the France of to-day vain attempts are being made to turn Impressionism to account in departments other than those of abstract æsthetics. Morris has at least attained one of the finest and most necessary results of modern art, a perfect taste in colour, and any improvement of European fabrics in recent times is due primarily to him and not to modern painters. He had, of course a profound comprehension of the significance of

colour. In his writings he continually recurs to the laws of contrast, which he found ruthlessly neglected by contemporary industry. It must not, however, be forgotten that from his standpoint colour was but one decorative element among others, though an element of the highest importance (just as I hold it to be in painting), and that for him the problem that dealt with material colour, ultimately resolved itself into that of the animation of the surface generally. His whole decorative style was closely bound up with this conception. He insisted very strongly on the view that careful handling of the means whereby an effect is produced was more important than the originality of the means themselves. To him indeed ornament differed little from the colours which he mixed to wash in his designs. He was entirely penetrated by the tradition of form which had dominated the past of his countrymen, and this he sought to revivify as poet, as antiquarian, and as artist ; hence the decorative lines of his forefathers were not only not strange to him, but were heirlooms which he appropriated as a poet may take a word or an image which he finds in an old song and thinks worthy to be preserved. Out of these things he made a language of his own, a language so harmonious, and expressive of ideas so valuable, that it would be impious to cavil at its details. What seemed to him essential in this was not so much originality, as expression, the organ of a being who desired order in himself and in his surroundings. In the old masters he was chiefly impressed by the fact that their ambitions were wholly free from the modern passion for originality and that they were dominated by a profound and consistent purpose in the face of which our individual desires are but petty whims. It was perhaps this advantage, which at the present day people are prone to regard as a defect, that made the success of his great plan certain. Morris and his circle were fortunate indeed in the fact that their art was not marked by the salient characteristics of modern artistic individuality ; this was why he succeeded better than Van de Velde in avoiding distracting personal controversy. Jealousies, general and particular, would never have allowed the expression of a single personality that precedence which Morris demanded ; but it occurred to no one to be jealous of Gothic art. It was not so much Morris as the intense nationalism of his form that conquered the Pre-Raphaelites. The poetry of Dante, which had been the inspiration of Rossetti was forgotten in the solemn splendour of the Arthurian legend. The delicate female figures of Burne-Jones were surrounded by the austere ornament of Early English churches.

Morris did not merely take Gothic as he found it, he enriched it with every addition which could serve his purpose. An oriental influence rather than the spirit of Chaucer is apparent in his earliest and most successful work in textiles, and in the wall-paper designs which almost owe their origin to him as a modern art. His first and most famous " Daisy " paper with its charming blossoms is a free rendering of a Persian pattern. The colour-schemes of his carpets and many of their patterns show how thoroughly he had studied the principles which guide the weavers of Damascus. Besides his extensive knowledge he had an incomparable artistic sense. A few hundred years hence one can imagine a historian doubting to what period these productions should be assigned, but they will be treasured by the taste of every epoch. Morris understood elaborate ornament as none of his many successors have understood it. He made it so rich that in the wealth of detail the design disappears, leaving but an unusual sense of structure behind. In the magnificent textile, *The Dove and the Rose*, we see only the silvery gray-blue effects, and the design seems merely to express the nature of the materials

employed, silk and the finest wool. For coarser stuffs he invented bolder patterns, but his patterns invariably avoided the fatal disconnectedness of modern design; they cover the ground which they decorate and carry the eye agreeably over it. In rooms decorated by Morris, even before we admire the imagination of the decorator, we have a sense of well-being.

Morris was a highly complicated character. In reading the biography with its many extracts from first-hand records by Aymer Vallance * we are astounded at the versatility of his interests. His strong literary inclinations lead us involuntarily to the conclusion that here was a fine character taking refuge in thought, making a house of fancies and asking but little of reality. What is irresistible in Morris is the tangible character of his productions, the fact that his comprehensive culture took a visible form and became reality, made by a sound mind for the comfort of other sound minds, while his many-sidedness merely served to increase the perfection of his work. His was a purely English culture. It was truly English of him to omit Goethe from his list of the hundred best books, because he did not understand German. † He was indeed profoundly English. No nation is likely to produce a man who combines all the virtues of the race to such an extent as Morris combined the advantages of his own nation; a culture very one-sided, but with every gradation of this one-sidedness; a patriotism the strength of which overpowered all obstacles and even compensated for defective powers, and a view of life inspired by the keenest sense of its necessities, which made this poet, whom another poet praises as Chaucer's favourite child, a man of commerce.

His influence was irresistible. Artists, including older men who did not need his counsel and whose artistic power was greater than his own, came to him as to a father. His moral influence was so great and his powerful spirit so inspiring that no one thought of questioning his capacity as a pure artist. The atmosphere of his house breathed homeliness, and it was this that made it possible for him successfully to put friendship to the severest test by associating his friends' names with his own in the commercial style of his firm.‡

This union under the flag of commerce immortalised the Pre-Raphaelites far more effectually than the brotherhood with the mysterious initials. The greatest exploits of the English movement are written in the books of the firm of Morris and Co. The venture was not only a test of good fellowship, which can rarely resist the malicious saying of Mirabeau, "Les affaires sont les affaires," but was also a test of the practical value of Morris' work, and indeed of all modern art. The revolution was not produced by the fact that a few artists went into business. Morris and his friends might have produced things just as beautiful and have placed them on the market without exciting the attention of more than a

* "William Morris, his Art, his Writings, and his Public Life." London: G. Bell and Sons, 1897.

† In the essay, "The Hundred Best Books," in the "Pall Mall Gazette," No. 24 (1886).

‡ Aymer Vallance has written the history of the firm in the book above mentioned. No precise date can be given for its foundation, which apparently took place in 1861. The original idea is said to have been due to Ford Madox Brown. The founders, apart from Morris, were, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes the painter, the architect Philip Webb, the engineer P. P. Marshall, and C. J. Faulkner. The firm was originally styled Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. Morris conducted the business from the outset, and became independent manager in 1874. In this year the other partners retired and the firm was thenceforth styled Morris and Co. In the sixties the premises of the company were at 26 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, where Morris himself lived. The well-known shop in Oxford Street was not opened until 1877. The chief workshops were concentrated about 1880 in an old abbey at Merton in Surrey, of which a charming description is to be found in the "Spectator" of November 1883. *Cf.* also Gabriel Mourey's account in his delightful book, "Passé le Deroit."



WILLIAM MORRIS: THE ROSE AND THE DOVE

few critics. Success was due to the form of the establishment. At first perhaps it was merely a form, for the firm did not require a strict business mechanism and its prosperity did not depend upon the chance passer-by, as the customers were friends. Moreover the first prospectus emphatically excluded purely commercial views. The firm did not even go so far as to assert that they wished to make money, nor indeed was any one wedded to this logical result of trade. In this case the form of the foundation was all-important. It was the token of a new period, the prelude of a great drama, which the world was to behold with astonishment, and which speedily produced the most important results. It was not the moral importance that produced an immediately decisive effect, though even in the London of the sixties a highly romantic era full of sentimental painting and tender poetry, the sudden appearance of the artists apparently least in touch with practical life, in the character of tradesmen, must have amazed every citizen interested in art. It may have been regarded as one of the many eccentric ideas no one but an artist would be mad enough to take up, a new kind of masquerade. The importance of the step, however, lay in the fact that the firm had business to do and that its relations were forthwith changed, both towards its customers and still more towards the mass of other producers. The artist's rôle in executing commissions for the rich, had formerly been that of middleman between the customer and the manufacturer. The latter undertook the responsibility, the artist furnished the design. His influence was limited and in the last resort he could not guarantee that the customer would not be cheated. These conditions were now changed, for the artist became the deliverer of his own goods. As early as 1859, when he was twenty-five years of age, Morris had set up his own home, the Red House at Upton, which he built in co-operation with Philip Webb, and which Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and others decorated with paintings; he had thus acquired a number of experiences, the most important being the fact that it was possible to work with friends. The limited resources at his disposal in a small country town and the invincible determination of the architect to work out Ruskin's ideas, obliged Morris to act for himself. This task must have seemed much easier to him in London. Where he could not secure the help of others he produced what he required for himself. This confident beginning produced an immediate effect upon many manufacturers, who perhaps had also read "The Stones of Venice" or who found it advisable to make use of this difficult, but well-to-do customer, who might become a rival at any moment. Nothing was more welcome to Morris. He had a gift for agitation which was perhaps even greater than that of Ruskin himself, and he had also the inestimable advantages of thorough practical knowledge, which enabled him to prove the superiority of artistic honesty decisively, and by actual achievement, to people who regarded Ruskin's ideas as Utopian. Production on a large scale was not immediately affected by this movement; Morris, who hated all commercialism, did not attempt to exert influence of this kind and would not have secured a hearing if he had; his public were the craftsmen and the artists. Here his influence increased from day to day. The chief business of the firm of Morris and Co., was at first the erection of painted church windows, the designs for which were drawn by Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown. Some of these windows were exhibited in 1862 at the International Exhibition in London, and with such success that rivals asserted that the windows were composed of ancient fragments and were therefore disqualified for competition. Experts were actually called in to settle the discussion, which of course ended in a complete triumph

for the artists.* This won over the architects, ecclesiastical and secular, and this was of decisive importance. The movement on the Continent was especially injured by the fact that people began, not with the foundations of the edifice but with the weathercock. Painters in England lent their names, but not any material help. The first commissions were successful, not by reason of any special originality in the designs, but by the thorough completeness of the execution. The architect Seddon, one of the first to place orders with the firm, gave them the task of executing his own furniture designs, thus treating Morris, not only as a designer, but also as a craftsman, and had the decorations he required executed by the painters of the firm.†

Finally there was one important point that made everything easy. Morris did not regard himself as a revolutionary leader, and he was not generally considered to be so; he merely organised an existing tendency, which even Ruskin had not created, but had simply brought to clear consciousness. The want of this tradition is what stands in the way of Belgians, French and Dutch and of all the enthusiasts who have followed the English. Their efforts were invariably isolated, and though their subjective value might be infinite, nothing could replace the quiet co-operation of the national genius of which Morris was the standard-bearer.

The architecture which had created a simple model in the Red House at Upton was developed upon sensible lines by Webb, Nesfield, and in particular by Norman Shaw. Of this movement men like Baillie-Scott, Newton, and many others of the younger generation are the true continuation. The rough characteristics of the older men were softened and made more graceful, the style was freed from detail too obviously Gothic, but the framework remained unchanged. At the present day the low built country houses with their broad roofs, their little windows, and the sturdy turrets of Voysey and his friends, reflect the silhouette of the Red House.

Development in every other department proceeded no less steadily. Morris created new industries for manufactures of every kind. His influence, if not his hand, secured that a rational use should be made of the new sources of supply which were discovered in the English colonies and which laid the foundation of the wealth of Liberty and Co. De Morgan was ready to make tiles for Morris, Jeffrey and Co. printed his papers; younger men, such as Crane, Voysey, Heywood Sumner, Lewis Day, and others, gave their friezes for the most part to the younger firm of Essex and Co. Benson turned Morris's ideas to account in metal work, introducing some modern improvements with advantage. Rathbone, Ashbee and the Birmingham artists mastered the art of chasing, while Wilson, Alexander Fisher, and others turned their attention to jewellery.

The rise of William Morris nearly coincides with the organisation of the technical schools, the industrial schools and guilds which distributed in many directions the ideas of Ruskin and of his prophet, to whom indeed is chiefly due the impression made by this new spirit upon the heart of the nation. The complex organisation of English societies also took its share in the work, and Morris neglected no opportunity to avail himself of this help. Among other bodies he

* Vallance, p. 60.

† Ibid. The interior of Seddon's house, displayed at the Exhibition of 1862, is fully described in the "Century Guild Hobby Horse," October 1888. One of the decorative panels was painted by Madox Brown and the others by Rossetti and Burne-Jones.

founded the Arts and Crafts Society in London and thus secured a place of exhibition worthy of the movement. Every three years all who followed his artistic theories gathered together under his presidency. Upon the day when the society opened its fifth exhibition in the New Gallery, the founder died. This was in the first days of October 1896, early enough to spare the master the anxious questions whether the impulse which he had given to the movement could be maintained and whither it would eventually lead.

* * * * * * *

Criticism of this artistic movement as a whole is not difficult. It is the only one which has produced great and visible results in our day. In other countries it may be necessary to seek out our evidences in the quiet of private houses, in England they are to be found in the streets; in other countries we have to consider individual symptoms, but in England they are so numerous and point with such unanimity to the same thing that we can hardly be mistaken in our estimate. It tends to become an underestimate. In the few years that have elapsed since the death of the great Morris so much has been done everywhere that the recent stagnation of England is the more marked. Here, as in the history of art, the comparative method seems to apply, and as soon as we admit the charm of originality as the most natural point of comparison, the inferiority of England becomes obvious.

This, however, involves a peculiar injustice. All discussion upon England, to be honest, must proceed from the postulate that England has something that other nations have not; that there is a common æsthetic characteristic observable in every department of English art and that no other style can be compared with the English, because hitherto no other has existed. If, then, without further reflection, we reproach England with stagnation we are but criticising to some extent this, her general advantage. A movement which is spread over a wide area naturally presents a different picture from a movement no less vigorous which is embodied in a few personalities. In the general estimate of public culture, the only criterion by which we can measure the strength of a style such as that which characterises England, individual exploits, however brilliant, are almost meaningless.

The English certainly owe their record, not merely to the strength of their form, but also to their gift for accommodating themselves to circumstances, and to the advantages of a communistic instinct which has maintained its ground in England better than anywhere else in Europe. Moreover the events which brought about the decay of Continental industrial production made less impression upon the nation in England. The country still possessed an inexhaustible number of examples of ancient popular art, which have been unharmed by revolution or by civil war, and the Englishman with his great love of country life could regard the productions of Morris and his circle as symbolical of this dearest passion, if they were nothing more to him. As the internal development of England proceeded more naturally than that of other countries and was spared the disturbance of great shocks and upheavals, so the power of England expanded outwards, like a well-managed family estate. England began to enjoy her wealth when the resources of France were strained to the uttermost and when Germany was but beginning to build up her fortune with toil and pain. London was never so extravagant as was Paris under the Second Empire and never so economical as was Berlin during the same period. In advance of the Continent by some genera-

tions in respect of her social and economical development, England already possessed the means for developing a middle class art at the time when the French were quarrelling for the favour of the Empress in the Tuileries and when German capitals, more piously minded, were awaiting some artistic stimulus from on high. Morris and his friends appealed primarily to a social class which was accessible to them, which possessed sufficient education to understand their ideas or to simulate understanding, and sufficient wealth to buy their productions. They were also fortunate in being rich enough to go their own way in economic independence and to produce their first and most necessary examples at their own expense. These were facts which contributed to save Morris from that enforced isolation with which our artists are obliged to struggle, and which would certainly have overwhelmed this distinguished genius in any other country. Even his Socialist propaganda could not check the growth of his popularity. For this he had to thank the profoundly popular character of his art, which was more obvious in any one of the things made by his hand than in all his economic writings. He did not aim at popularity. Crane is the truly popular man, the idol of the national taste, who can conjure with pictures great and small.

If we attempt to sum up the characteristics of all that Morris produced, we are struck by one invariable geometrical peculiarity—the flat surface of his form. That there is no sculpture in England, may be seen by a glance at any table or chair. The practical purpose which rediscovered the Gothic style was satisfied by the combination of straight lines, both for the building of a house and for every piece of furniture which was to decorate the interior. It was the simplest and therefore the most economical form, the most capable of independent elaboration, the most indispensable foundation of any further development, and above all the form most capable of benefiting by the perfection of modern manufacturing processes. Morris remained faithful to Ruskin in so far as he resisted these. In his workshops machines were forbidden, except in so far as they implied the transference of the workman's power, as in the case of a handpress. He even refused the aid of machinery in cases where it would have been a most admirable instrument for his propaganda. The protest of the artist against the industrialism which he rightly regarded as the root of the evil was so vehement that he always hated industrial implements as such; they were to him a symbol of ugliness even after he had discovered their value in disseminating his gospel of beauty. This mode of reasoning, however, was not the blind obstinacy of the peasant who plants himself astride on a line of rails in order to stop a locomotive; it was the sure intuition that thousands would co-operate to complete this course of development, but that no one would feel obliged to place the ideal so high as he had placed it, and that it was therefore his task to concentrate his method as strongly as possible without regard to the future. He created a model which offered to the spectator the same strong beauty, defiant of all compromise, from whatever side it was regarded. Had he acted differently, he would not have been Morris.

Morris and his friends did their best to make this very simple form as attractive as possible. Apart from the work of the individual craftsman, this result could only be secured by beauty in the relation of the several parts, and English architects, with their fine feeling for these effects, have produced excellent works. Plastic decoration was replaced by flat ornament. The thin painting of the Pre-Raphaelites, who had retained the definite outlines, combined very naturally with this kind of decoration; Morris was able to give it the best imaginable setting, though



BURNE-JONES AND WILLIAM MORRIS: TAPESTRY AT STANMORE HALL

in so doing he betrayed the limitations of his own powers, and those of his friends. The morning room, with the famous frieze by Burne-Jones, in the excellent house which Webb built for Lord Carlisle, is a case in point.* The frieze on wooden panels, painted with the history of Cupid and Psyche, runs round the upper part of the wall; above it meets a beautiful ceiling, designed by Morris, and below, the wainscot, which Morris divided into panels decorated partly with beautiful Roman script and partly with a simple leaf pattern. The room proclaims the love of the artist for his work; nothing has been forgotten which could help his scheme, and the result could scarcely be improved. Yet the impression produced is not entirely satisfactory. It is not so much the details as the general scheme that has a certain pettiness of effect, suggesting that the artists were only concerned to fill the space as conscientiously as possible. In this they have succeeded; Burne-Jones is perhaps at his best here; and yet, though the result is perfectly agreeable, it lacks any touch of genius. Every dividing line is clearly defined, and there is no great or striking motive to make the room more than an apartment of so many square yards; the architecture sticks to the walls; but it does not live in them, and, instead of experiencing one strong effect, we feel that our own sensations have been carefully analysed and neatly distributed. The whole scheme is not the decoration of a room but the illustration of a book tremendously enlarged. The beauty and accuracy which please us in English books is here to be found on a huge scale, but the charm does not increase in the same proportion. Indeed, the effect is depressing at last, like every other disproportion. There is an ultimate and a fatal weakness in this deliberate over-emphasis of individual detail.

According to the "Studio" Burne-Jones' designs for the frieze were originally intended as ornaments for one of Morris' books, † and were probably enlarged by more or less mechanical means as were the designs of Burne-Jones for the Arras tapestry of William Morris, to which the same observations apply. ‡

Thus again the furniture in the house of the Cupid and Psyche frieze is refined and simple but inconsiderable. If we look closely the material seems good; the design of Webb's chimney-piece has purity. But from a wider point of view the material comes to nothing, because it does not achieve any definite form. In the room which contains the Arras tapestries, even the most superficial coherence of the details is lost. Some pieces of the furniture seem to betray the horribly practical wardrobe style, which protests loudly against the luxury of the Gobelins. It is the same in many English interiors. They are comfortable and suited to the space available; the furniture is coherent in style, but has no deeper relationship to the room. The pieces stand about the apartments like the metal ornamentation stuck on many pieces of English furniture, outwardly secured, but with no inward cohesion. There is no intensive effect of colour or relief. We do not require such effects as a sculptor or a painter could give, but we do look for

* 1 Palace Green, Kensington, London. Apart from this frieze the house contains a number of pictures by Burne-Jones and Crane, who also worked at the frieze under the guidance of Burne-Jones. Illustrations are given in the "Studio," October 15, 1898.

† They were drawn in 1865 for the "Earthly Paradise." Morris himself cut wood blocks for most of them. The book never appeared. In the above-quoted number of the "Studio," mention is made of a prospectus of the book, which was printed at the Chiswick Press, and of which one copy is said to be extant, containing the designs of the frieze. It would be interesting to compare this prospectus, which I have unfortunately not been able to see, with the decorations in Lord Carlisle's house.

‡ See "Studio," No. 68, November 15, 1898.

such as the architect, with his paper before him and the room in his mind, can discover.

Room decoration is not to be developed in this way. Even the ideal union of friends on which Morris relied could not secure the large unity which alone can make such work powerful. He secured honesty of material, which was his aim, and was so fortunate as to aim no higher. Had he set his thoughts upon high art such as alone seems to us worth striving for, he would certainly have made shipwreck. For this purpose he required the strength which England had lost, the giant hand which arranges a room as Manet arranged a picture, the art to which, so far, the painters alone have brought us back, but which cannot be compassed by men of Burne-Jones' calibre.

The greatness of Morris consists in the fact that the compromise which he attempted was quite unconscious, and that he fulfilled to the uttermost, with entire faithfulness, all that could be accomplished with means which were infinitely meagre. He was deceived by his unity in ideas with his friends. The joys of friendship, with which he was blessed beyond any one of our time, brought him to the erroneous conclusion that the value of so many sympathetic efforts must be great and striking. He thought of the ancients who had worked in this manner. Every tangible fact which was to be found in the great epochs of collaboration seemed to be here ; there was unity of purpose, common faith in an ideal, and mutual understanding. But one incomprehensible and intangible thing was lacking, the element of genius.



LAURENCE HOUSMAN. DRAWING.

ENGLISH BOOK-ILLUSTRATION

THE illustrative character of the English style found its most natural expression in the art of book-illustration. The whole movement of English art begins in literature. Blake had started it by painting pictures round his verses and every one of his poetical successors followed his example, which they never forgot. The poet Morris, whom Rossetti thought would be reckoned by posterity among the great English singers * (so strongly did the form of a harmonious spirit work upon weaker minds), was obliged, in England at least, to expend greater care upon the form in which his poems should be printed than upon other manifestations of his talent. In England book decoration is not a branch of industry; it is the source of all art, as painting is in France. The absurdity of this assertion expresses the latent absurdity of the whole English movement, over the history of which the saying of Morris, quoted by Vallance, might be placed as a motto: "The only work of art which surpasses a complete mediæval book is a complete mediæval building."

People naturally love an art of which they are masters. The Italians of the great period painted frescoes, Northern races contented themselves with framed pictures, while our moderns design borders. English books contain the highest degree of the pictorial emotion which can be satisfied by this means.

Morris did not make book production a part of his business until comparatively late, that is to say, he did not print the Kelmscott books from his own press until within the last seven years of his life.† He regarded them as a kind of apotheosis of his whole theory of art, and redoubled if possible the anxious care which he devoted to all questions of material. His books, indeed, can only be compared with the most splendid examples of Caxton, Julian Notary, Pynson, and others. They are, at the same time, much akin to the ancients in form. Nowhere did Morris indulge more in archaism than in his printing.

And yet he was very far from confining himself to the mere mechanical reproduction of a model. He never gave way to the folly which forgets that the main purpose of a book's existence is that it should be read. The comparative clearness of his type, even in books which were printed in the stout black letter of Chaucer, is very remarkable. Of course, these books were not intended for the half-educated City man, who gulps down his newspaper on his way from his home to his office. They were books for quiet edification, when the reader is glad to concentrate his mind upon every word, books which were to be as perfect in form as the thoughts they expressed, and these thoughts Morris printed, so to speak, in louder and clearer accents, which might almost replace the sound of the spoken word.

* "Among the greatest English singers of the past, perhaps only four have possessed this assimilative power in pure perfection, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Byron and Burns, and to their names the world may probably add in the future that of William Morris." (*The Academy*, February 1871).

† From 1891 to 1897 about fifty works were printed in the Kelmscott Press. A list of these and of earlier works is to be found at the end of Vallance's book.

The limitations of this art may be narrow, but within them it is admirable. One is sometimes inclined to think that Morris was actually able to produce effects of colour with simple black-and-white; such pages as the beautiful title-page of "A Tale of Over-sea," with the rich ornamentation winding among the capital letters, produces an effect like that of the most brilliantly-coloured oriental miniature. The masterly pages of the "Golden Legend" and other productions of the kind have a solemn splendour, an animated richness which dispel all thought of the mechanism of his technique. It is impossible to read the endless dissertations of Morris on type, large or small margins, the never-ending paper problem and the complications of making true printers' ink without impatience. But a glance at the result of these diverse efforts removes all idea of artificiality and leaves only delight in its high artistic merits. In black and white Burne-Jones also succeeded very much better than in large pictures. His pictorial instinct here found its proper sphere and attained a level of expression which was within his reach. Morris was able to make some use even of Crane, but his best work was always that which he did alone.

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In England, the book was the medium in which the most important artistic developments were brought to the most decisive issue. This was particularly the case when the younger generation of Englishmen came to reckon with Morris' conceptions of form. The vigorous one-sidedness of the master clearly suggested points at which others could begin. In comprehensiveness and universality of grasp, no Englishman has surpassed him. No examples in textiles or wall-papers, his favourite departments, produced either during his lifetime or a few years after his death, can compare with his own work; and in book production also his ambition is as unapproachable as the splendour of his materials. There were some, however, who abandoned the attempt to compete with the old masters and made successful efforts to enrich the tradition they were handing down. Progress necessarily broke through the narrow limits of primitive English form and gathered up the elements which Morris had neglected. Among these influences there was one which the master of Kelmscott had rejected as useless for his purposes, Japanese draughtsmanship. Morris, with sound instinct, suspected danger from the influence of this "unarchitectonically" minded people. Strangely enough he included both China and Japan in this criticism, probably because he could only see the exotic side of both as displayed by Whistler, whom he cordially detested. No doubt a deeper experience would have made him one of the first to recognise the infinite superiority of the Chinese genius over that of its successor and the living value of Chinese art for our own æsthetic conceptions, while he would have admired in Japan all that she had retained of her prototype. In any case the rising generation in England has to thank William Morris for a relative resistance to the fantastic draughtsmanship of Japan. His sound example was too immediate and too convincing not to cause some reserve in the acceptance of Japanese influence. The majority were, of course, conquered by bric-à-brac and attenuated even the floral art of Walter Crane with Japanese flowers. Some few artists of talent had a deeper conception of the problem at issue. Of these one of the foremost is Charles Ricketts, to whom I have already referred as a painter. All the imperfections of his pictures are forgotten in view of his books. As compared with Morris, Ricketts, in his drawings, stood for a more reticent, delicate and

profound method, and notwithstanding the unusual complexity of his ideas, he is able to retain a conventional form. Japanese art forms but a small element in his style; it is difficult, in fact, to indicate the full extent of his eclecticism. Every influence which can attract a man to the strange and the rare in art, is present in his works in finely regulated quantities. In addition, in his earlier books from 1890 to 1895, he occasionally employed a technique which increased the confusing impression of his style. In the illustrations to the edition of Lord de Tabley's poems, published by John Lane, he employed a style of etching which reminds us in part of Dürer's woodcuts. The cover for Oscar Wilde's "Sphinx," on the other hand, displays delicate figures in perpendicular hieroglyphs; the woodcuts within this beautiful book are in delicate red brown on white and the initials in green. The decorations of "Hero and Leander," * in which he was helped by his friend C. H. Shannon, show the same attenuated distinction. The cover-design consists merely of a few simple geometrical lines in gold upon parchment. Together with these books the two friends produced a magazine known as "The Dial," to which Shannon contributed beautiful lithographs and Ricketts brilliant woodcuts. Unless I am mistaken, the text was printed by the old Chiswick Press in a masterly style. The whole was marked by a delicate taste, in comparison with which the master of the Kelmscott Press must have seemed unduly ponderous. Morris, indeed, could hardly be called tasteful. He was too mathematical, and his effects were secured by the sagacious employment of logical precepts. He neither had the art of startling his admirers nor ever cared to have it, but he was always perfectly safe. The typography of his successors, on the other hand, was an experiment. In the case of the early books by Ricketts, it is not always easy to decide how much was his and how much was due to the publisher, so that it would be wrong to compare these productions with the Kelmscott works, which Morris produced alone with unlimited means at his disposal. Ricketts, too, soon felt impelled to set up for himself. "The Dial" appeared as an independent publication. In 1894 he published the little picture book, "The Queen of the Fishes," all of which Lucien Pissaro, the son of Camille, cut on wood and printed with his little press at Epping; it is one of the most charming achievements of modern book production, a union of French and English art which was only brought about by the happiest of chances.† Shortly afterwards Ricketts founded the publishing house of Hacon and Ricketts, from which a number of beautiful books have since been issued. He learnt simplicity and wholly abandoned the methods of Morris in favour of a more tractable and modern form of simple and natural elegance; at the present day he is one of the most capable of those London artists who maintain the prestige of English book production. In spite of England's great wealth in books the number of these artists is not great. There is, indeed, no lack of illustrators, who include such refined artists as Laurence Housman, William Strang, Selwyn Image, A. J. Gaskin and many others, but it would be vain to look for men like Ricketts, who approached the problem of book production as a task

* Published by Elkin Matthews and John Lane in London.

† It must be said that among other qualities, vast industry was expended on the work. Pissaro not only cut the blocks with their delightful borders, but also the whole of the text of the seventeen pages. The fundamental colour of the text and of most of the pictures is a warm grey which goes very well with the yellow Japanese paper. The side notes are in a red shading towards yellow. Where there is a border, and this is only on pages with coloured pictures, it is pale green, gold on the first page. Five of the pictures are coloured. The effect of the whole is highly variegated and yet in perfect taste, while the little pictures, in which the old Pissaro seems to smile, are strong and vigorous. The text is as clear as is possible with this process.

no less worthy than architecture, and went to work in their own way, as did William Morris. It would be surprising if it were otherwise. For the realisation of Morris' ideal requires not merely an artist of unusual strength of will, but also a combination of fortunate circumstances, such as are rarely within the power of any one artist: practical common sense, commercial talent, great energy, and, above all things, money. Morris could never be more than a model, and an estimate of his whole work must invariably consider the individualism that characterises his entire production, notwithstanding the numerous popular features which it may reveal. That in an epoch like ours, characterised by the most complete division of labour, such centralisation of work and craftsmanship should be regarded as a model of organisation, is a beautiful and perhaps an inevitable but certainly an unattainable ideal. One young architect in London, C. R. Ashbee, has followed the example of Morris. He is the author of a series of aphorisms typical of English æsthetics,* a many-sided artist and president of the Guild and School of Handicraft, which set up its workshops in Whitechapel. To the numerous branches of his enterprise Ashbee has also added book production, and since the death of Morris he has brought out many beautiful books.

Such productions and the countless works privately printed for English collectors have many points of special interest; but they are lost among the mass of books which English publishers place upon the market and in the hands of the masses. The average production in this latter case reaches a highly respectable level. One could easily name more than a dozen houses which produce and publish none but books which are unexceptionable in form. The modern publishing firms ot London began to gather their special artists round them before Morris set up the Kelmscott Press; they aimed at a tasteful format, which should be characteristic of the books produced by their own firms as a whole, if not of individual volumes, and they all contributed to improve the tradition of this industry. Morris showed what excellence could be attained by such culture. It could not fail to produce a man of genius. This happened when the tradition had become familiar to young and eclectic artists, and when the Gothic style of their old leader was becoming too narrow. It did not spread beyond the boundaries within which it originated, but within its own small province it produced such magical beauty that we might be inclined for a moment to believe the perishable paper of a book could stimulate creative genius, no less than the great frescoes, panels and canvases which inspired the genius of the old masters.

* Collected in "Chapters on Workshop Reconstruction and Citizenship" (London, 1894, Guild and School of Handicraft). The workshops of the guild have been for some time at Campden.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND HIS CIRCLE

By ways remote and distant waters sped,
Brother, to thy sad graveside am I come,
That I may give the last gifts to the dead,
And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb;
Since she who now bestows and now denies
Hath ta'en thee, hapless brother, from mine eyes.
But lo! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,
Are made sad things to grace thy coffin shell
Take them, all drenchèd with a brother's tears,
And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell!

A. B.

At Beardsley's house one used to see the finest and most explicitly erotic Japanese prints in London. They hung in plain frames against delicately coloured backgrounds, the wildest phantasies of Utamaro, and were by no means decent, though when seen from a distance delicate, proper and harmless enough. There are but few collectors of these things, as they cannot be exhibited, so they were comparatively cheap ten years ago, and among them the best preserved prints are to be found.

To talk with Beardsley among these pictures was to enter into a new world of thought, and the pictures seemed as natural to the room as the grandparents' portraits over the sofa of a middle-class citizen. Coming from Burne-Jones, where there was nothing to be seen but Christian primitives, and where the conversation, like the master, seemed to move in list slippers, it was necessary to twist oneself into a new attitude, which was less restrained but no less delicate. Beardsley's conversation, at any rate, was distinguished by a refreshing moderation. Flitting delicately from theme to theme, he had the art of making those observations which are accidental and yet necessary.

Who knows Beardsley? It has often happened to me when speaking with artists and poets who are unconsciously wandering in his shadow, to receive, upon mention of his name, a somewhat diplomatic answer, the speaker being unwilling to admit that he heard for the first time a name which his questioner considered so important. Ours is an age which is rapidly overpowered by the commonplace, when people learn, read, and see with great rapidity; so that the excess of their experience or some other reason produces the gloomy result that not only men like ourselves, but even men of genius like Beardsley, are unknown even to those whose artistic style is entirely in harmony with his. Thus many a man wanders astray without hope of return, or misses the final flower of maturity which is essential to the perfection of his art, either because certain echoes never reach his ears, or because his hearing has lost its delicacy amid the uproar of grosser sounds.

The one point which I trust that this book will make clear is the necessity for clearer views upon an organic system of æsthetics, an organic culture from which



AUBREY BEARDSLEY: CHOPIN, BALLADE III OP. 47
FROM "THE STUDIO"

we are worlds removed, and of which we have not the slightest inkling. I hope to show that certain things belong not to culture, but to life, that these things are necessary to the expression of intellectual needs, and are to be accepted even more unquestioningly than the convention that we shall not eat with our knives or introduce ladies to gentlemen. Culture is the due completion of our consciousness with everything necessary to the comprehension and furtherance of the claims of the present. Of a hundred important artists born within so many years, a certain number are indispensable, not because they produce this or that effect upon the mind, but because they affect their age and because they are symbolical of ourselves, and to know them is to have a true knowledge of our own life, to possess a means of resistance to that pessimism which can see nothing good in our own time, and a valuable weapon against the wild optimism which declines to see what is bad in it. These men, in one word, give us knowledge; they are themselves concentrated knowledge. Beardsley is one of them, and to have seen every one of his fragments is a more urgent necessity than to know a single picture by Burne-Jones or Watts, even were the works of these artists ten times more beautiful than they are. To follow the evolution of art, as we have here occasionally attempted, is interesting and certainly more useful and dignified than to collect postage stamps or to play piquet, but at the same time a knowledge of certain contemporary artists is wholly indispensable. Not until we have learnt to understand Beardsley or Dostojewski or Manet as we understand Bismarck, shall we reach the stage of culture. The point is not whether these men were artists, statesmen, or anything else; they have our age at their fingers' ends, each in the art peculiar to himself; the individuality of each is such that if we know only one our knowledge will be distorted. This knowledge is not necessary to genius, and may even be harmful on occasion to a creative mind. We may entertain an infinite distrust of such prophylactics and regard them as nothing more or less than original sin of the worst kind which in Goethe's days had not yet been infused into our blood. Not until a later date was it fashionable for poets to dress as negligently as possible, and it is no mere coincidence that these people know nothing of painting except that it is made with oil like a salad, and commit the appalling lapses of taste in their writings which for some time were worshipped as originality. There are some ages when good taste requires more gifts than genius.

In this sense we are pleased to speak of Beardsley as a man of genius, though he only illustrated books and did not even make furniture; our estimate is based on the elements of modern life and not on comparison with those of other epochs, although these provide reason enough for reverencing him.

His genius consisted in the fact that he was able to give objectivity and therefore style to the whole practice of this period of English art. He, too, had known Botticelli and had worshipped Beatrice; his origins were those of Rossetti. But the language of the Quattrocento was not his and he did not prattle in it like the others; he preferred to jest, and in general to express himself in his own tongue. His Beatrice has the features of Réjane. Beardsley was the first Englishman who turned whole-heartedly to France; not only had he seen Réjane, but had seen her with the eyes of a Parisian, with the eyes of Forain. He did not turn to Chaucer literature, but illustrated "Manon Lescaut," designed pictures for "Madame Bovary" and Gautier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin," busied himself with Balzac, was amused by Zola like any other member of the Quartier Latin,

and was a devoted admirer of Mallarmé. In Paris he would have become a Lautrec, and he became what he was because he deemed this development the best for him as an Englishman and the best for his art. Some of his India ink drawings remind us of Gavarni, others of Guys, while others, and these more precious, show his delicate pencil playing with wavy lines breathed on the paper like the hair of a young girl and recalling a Frenchman of the eighteenth century, a St. Aubin, as Whistler would have conceived him. It was not Japan, but France that determined his style. He often went to France, and went there finally to die. His appreciation of Puvis was not that of his compatriots, and the French rising generation thought more of him than of Burne-Jones. In Paris he deepened his manner and sharpened his wit which had a honeyed quality in London ; into the extravagance of the enthusiastic poet painter he introduced the coquettish impudence of his own graceful Pierrots. He was the gentleman artist of England.

Japanese art had an important influence on his technique. He found that the small format of book illustration which is close to the eye and restricted to black and white, requires a handling of detail different from that required by the larger surface of oil painting : Harunobu and Utamaro were to him different stages of a masterly art, perfectly suited to its format. At first he confined himself to a Japanese treatment of the brilliant line of Forain, and to writing satires in the lyric language of Japan. The employment of the Empire for scenic accessories added a further attraction that was no less Japanese. This he rendered, typographically, by means of slender perpendicular lines, and a style of furniture which by no means recalled Napoleon, but rather Louis XVI. and still more Beardsley. It was the Empire, again, which provided him with the costume of his heroes, with these rich fabrics woven of black and white dots, and with the confusion of laces and ruches and braids, and the fabulous elegance of their environment.

A whole book might be written upon Beardsley's art of costume. The fashion which he led, or which he followed, consciously or unconsciously, is plutocratic, but he understood how to make clothes immaterial—to resolve them into line and shimmer, and to cover a petticoat with roses without making it clumsy and formless. He put his soul into it. It was not only in his pictures that he spoke of clothes ; he was proud of making them his exclusive theme, and he showed how completely satisfied his heroes were to take this for their life-work. Our utilitarianism was never rebuked in stronger or haughtier terms. He dreamed of a theatre in which Grace was heroine, in which the silk of the dresses whispered the dialogue, and the fold of a garment gave the pose. At times, but rarely, his compositions show some touch of action, but in such cases the subjects are such as to seem somewhat venturesome, even to those unaffected by English prejudices. He dresses them, however, not after the manner of the lascivious scoundrels of the eighteenth century, who hide what they allow to be seen, but boldly as the Spaniard who shows his coat-of-arms and as innocently and delightfully as the Japanese. The gesture is sublime even when it is shameless. He brings style even into the coarsest theme, and makes it not only possible, but respectable, indeed of unimpeachable morality. Analysis of the materials of his domain brings us no nearer to him.

The passions of humanity are no worse to-day than they were two thousand years ago in Greece and its neighbouring islands. The difference is only a matter of gesture, but this we have lost. Beardsley should be described less prosaically,

and in a form of poetry or prose which touches only the thousand beautiful external details and goes no deeper, in order not to tarnish the chaste indecency which he affected. This was the style of language which he himself employed upon the few occasions when he wrote;* as in the romantic novel, "Under the Hill," the delightful history of the Abbé Fanfreluche. Any one who knows Beardsley's drawings and reads these writings will be grateful for an additional means of recalling them to his memory. He does not sound every chord, and often the most exquisite are silent, but we can obtain some idea of his unexampled wealth of ideas, of the delicate discriminations of his taste, almost magical in so young a man, of the unrestrained creative power in the case of subjects which are usually anything rather than the transitory productions of the moment, and therefore betray no youthful touch so far as their creative ability is concerned. The logical quality is the most remarkable thing here; we learn to know, not the artist or the writer, but the man himself; who does not only don his velvet coat when inspired by the muse, but is an artist even in négligé; whatever we may find in his work, we never find a motive which is out of harmony with his art. Of how many artists can so much be said?

The thing which is not expressed in Beardsley's writings, is the strength which lies behind his delicacy. As a writer he was an amateur, but the lines of his draughtsmanship are often so strong and simple that the greatest Japanese artists are outdone. His minuteness is not trivial, nor is it an attempt to find contributory detail, however brilliantly conceived; every touch is inevitable. This is comprehensible in certain cases where there was a serious note in his humour. Elsewhere he was only the virtuoso, amusing himself with the play of incomparable artistic powers, turning to every conceivable style with his extraordinary versatility, sometimes half in jest, sometimes half in earnest, but invariably brilliant. He resembles an artist like Rubinstein, who sometimes after a brilliant concert would play to a lingering group of admirers in the hall, fantasias upon Beethoven or Chopin or Glück, which evoked tears and laughter at the same time. In these extravaganzas Beardsley did not retain the current fashionable style. We have ornament by him in all the styles of the late renaissance, details of great or small size which he drew for the purpose, as it were, of sharpening his pencil, in the intervals between some infamous portrait of Messalina or Salome, or some splendid interior. In one day he could be Baroque, Empire, Pre-Raphaelite or Japanese, and was sometimes all of these together in the same picture. Yet he was always Beardsley. Our culture, which knows and loves everything, and in spite of that, or perhaps because of that, desires to retain its individuality, became in him a brilliant and attractive reality.

The Greek spirit of modern dreamers, which of all things was least superficially obvious in his work, affected him more decisively than any other influence in the end. This frail youth attained that for which the old and new academicians of London were earnestly striving, and which they missed perhaps, not so much because of their own deficiencies as because of the English atmosphere; he achieved what had never so much as been dreamed of by Sir Frederic Leighton, the most dignified of all those who attempted to assume the garb of Greece. Beardsley is thought an impudent rascal, but compared with this stupendous academician, how mild and modest he appears! His lusts respected the

* Beardsley's writings appeared in a collection entitled "Under the Hill," issued by John Lane (London).

sanctuary; his self-knowledge forbade him to venture on profanation. He flew by like a delicate butterfly, filling his eyes with beauty and forming a marvellous fabric of what he had seen, a little world in miniature representing the great marvels of creation.

Phidias, had he been so unfortunate as to behold his English successors, would not have remarked them; his eye had not the gift of seeing things that were not there. But to Beardsley he might have given a friendly touch of the hand, as in his own days he may have walked among the potters after a day's hard work, to delight himself with the cleverness of an artist painting an Athene upon an amphora.

Since Furtwängler issued his magnificent work with its beautiful illustrations of Greek vases, it is possible to compare modern artists who imitated the ancients conveniently and easily with their models.* Of all these painters none approached one side of the Greek artists so nearly as Beardsley; not so much their line as the physiology and intelligence of their line. Most artists had seen nothing but the form and that usually from the point of view of sculpture, the great temptress of the painter. The enthusiasm of the admirer who was anxious, not to understand the Greek laws of form but to emulate their achievements, underestimated the task before him from two points of view. He, the modern, dreamt that he could reproduce a work of the Golden Age, and ventured to transcribe the subjects of the one art in the terms of the other, for which the Greeks had their own code of laws, laws applying not to sculpture but to painting, that is, to coloured drawing. It was these laws, and no mere external detail, that Beardsley learnt from the Greek vases. He discovered something of the cunning of the hand that held the unknown instrument which decorated the clay; he took the lines before they had become form, that is to say, the system of wide and narrow curves with their points and strokes, discovered the underlying design, the brilliant sketch of the vase painter, which sometimes seems a sublime refinement of these black and red pictures. He studied the relation between the outline and the delicate inner lines which gave the anatomy, the manner of depicting the hair of the head and the body; the net work of their ornamentation from its strongest and most animated passages to the caressing by-play of the minor details.

Rodin also examined these vases closely. Furtwängler gives a reproduction of the first design for an Attic crater of the Periclean period which, if it were provided with a red wash and a signature and placed in Rodin's portfolio, would be accepted as an authentic example of the master. For Rodin, however, the study of Greek design was but an exercise for higher purposes; he followed every path of ancient genius in order to broaden his style. Beardsley turned the same study to opposite account. He found in it a means for producing work which was minute without being diminutive.

He cared less for the solemn processions or the vigorous drawings of the battles with the giants, than for the playful struggles of baldheaded satyrs with gay nymphs, the favourite pictures of the Greeks as designed by the brilliant Brygos in the last quarter of the fifth century, or by Duris, the most unrestrained of these artists, who could venture anything with success, a man but little younger than his teacher, Brygos, and perhaps yet more delicately audacious in his figures. The British Museum possesses wonderful examples of this group. The side of them which we would prefer to see is generally turned to the wall, and in some cases the dainty details have been painted out by well-meaning

* Furtwangler-Reichhold, "Griechische Vasenmalerei" (Bruckmann, Munich).

guardians of the public morals. As these are necessary for the understanding of the whole design, as in the case of the detail of the famous bronze tripod at Naples, the best elements are often lost. The most beautiful Duris vase is the psykter in the British Museum with the dancing satyrs, inspired by wine to perform all kinds of acrobatic feats as they drink. It was here that Beardsley learnt the most precious secrets of his work, and certainly he had none of the prudishness of the curators. He owed it even more to the Greeks than to the Japanese that he had no need to be prudish and that the unrestrained eroticism of certain pages remains what it was intended to be, a device to intensify the rhythm. He loved both the Greeks and the Japanese, and his love was such that he attained in play what intellect fails to perceive and scholars regard as a regrettable æsthetic accident, accomplishing a union of divided worlds which our historians do not like to mention in the same breath. This alone gives Beardsley a very high place and makes clear how closely he is in touch with our age. He displayed the freedom of a new æstheticism which breaks with all irrelevant history and draws its strength from dominant instinct alone. He took subjects suited to his pencil and his achievements showed that he was right. Among the many eclectic artists of England who have dissipated their powers in the pursuit of universal beauty, Beardsley was the first to prove the morality of eclecticism by the fact that he turned it to practical account and created a unity of diverse elements, a beautiful handwriting, a calligraphy of taste.

The results of Beardsley are as yet veiled in obscurity. The fact that his art was limited to paper is of no importance, in view of the influence of Blake upon English art history. This limitation of means will speedily be discounted by the reproductive processes which it facilitates and which are now all important. Even now people profess to trace this influence where one would least expect it and point to Beardsley figures and the Beardsley style as they used to speak and still speak of the style of Watteau. Modern comparisons always have to make a silent compromise with large abstractions. Possibly, Beardsley is to become the Watteau of modern England. One conceives the painter of the eighteenth-century pastorals as a being very like this Englishman. The amalgamation of Flemish and Venetian was no less bold a venture at that date, and it was equally successful. Gersaint describes his friend as a lustful spirit but a moral character. Caylus refers to him as pleasant and tender and perhaps a trifle Arcadian. Beardsley preferred to treat the delicate subjects of his dreams and perished with them as the butterfly dies with the flowers, possibly a vicious and yet a lovely life. Both were unhealthy, melancholic temperaments who gladly escaped from the world to their dreams as if anxious to prepare for an early death. Beardsley reached his appointed term even more rapidly than Watteau. He died at the age of twenty-six, weary and perhaps satiated.

The creative energy of this consumptive young man was incredible. Within some seven years he produced, apart from his literary work and his pictures, over a thousand drawings, the majority of which were made for some definite illustrative purpose. Like every artist of his circle his first tribute was paid to the Arthurian legend. This consisted in the illustration, when he was twenty, of two stout volumes which he adorned with no less than five hundred and forty-eight drawings. A biographer has counted them.* In each volume a frontispiece

* "Le Morte Darthur" (London, Dent and Co., 1893 and 1894). A large number of sketches were collected by John Lane after the artist's death in the two volumes entitled "The Early Work of Aubrey

appeared in rich colouring which even then displayed the perfection of his art, especially that in the first volume representing King Arthur with the Questing Beast, where the exotic splendour of his imagination found full expression. A short time previously his drawings adorned the first number of the "Studio," to which Joseph Pennell introduced him. Possibly it was no mere chance that the zealous friend of Whistler should have stood sponsor to the young man, who was a Pre-Raphælite only in his mode of wearing his hair, and was soon to give a rich and unexpected vigour to the eternal line of Rossetti. In the Morte Darthur, we can follow the steps by which Beardsley's women were evolved from the contemplative female type of Burne-Jones. His *Isolde* displays all the characteristics of the female figures which follow, and these are no healthier than the figures of Burne-Jones, but the art expended upon them is the more so. Beardsley's art made a formula of morbidity, healthy inasmuch as it was a deliberate, scientifically exact representation that achieved the desired effect. Certain details, even in the latest works remind us of the school in which he learned. The women's mouths retain some resemblance to the exaggerated lips of Rossetti's Beatrice. In the case of Rossetti this oddity is nothing more than a curiosity in feature drawing without interest because it is purely superficial; Beardsley, however, without undue stress upon the lips, puts them in as he does a ruffle on the sleeve or a feather in the hat of his latter-day Aphrodites. The Pre-Raphaelites attempted to draw human beings and produced marionettes; Beardsley in his extravaganzas intended to draw marionettes, but he turned them into human beings.

In the "Yellow Book" pictures the Burne-Jones elements have entirely vanished, and Beardsley appears in full splendour.* The first drawing in the first volume, "L'Education Sentimentale," in which an appalling old hag is instructing a grown-up daughter (they must surely be Nanna and Pippa), was a kind of prelude to the work of this diviner Aretino.

Like Huysmans, he eventually became a Catholic. Religion is to such people a question of perfume. Caylus tells us of Watteau, that shortly before his death he destroyed his few indecent pictures. Beardsley did the same or begged his publisher † to fulfil this last wish, and the latter accordingly is said to have committed this iniquity and to have burned a large proportion of the best examples of the "Lysistrata" drawings as well as other unpublished material. When I saw the news of his death at Mentone, I remembered a four-post bed with a high lace-trimmed canopy under which Pierrot seems to be asleep. His head is sunk in the pillow, the long thin hand which so often guided the mad dance lies wearily upon the counterpane: a motley company approaches solemnly on tiptoe. Columbine comes first in a high black mantilla, her hooped skirts

Beardsley" (1899) with a biographical note by Marillier, and "The Later Work of Aubrey Beardsley" (1901). Compare also the biography by Gleeson White in the "Studio" for May 1898. The German, Franz Blei, has written a good appreciation of Beardsley (Pan. 5, last number); were it not for the confusing comparison with Rops, the essay would be even better; see also R. Klein in Muther (Bard), and Emil Hannover ("Kunst and Kunstler," i., No. 11).

* Elkin Matthews and John Lane, London, vols. i. to iv. (April 1894 to January 1895).

† Herr Wärdorfer of Vienna, who possesses many fine originals Beardsleys, some for the "Lysistrata" series, has also a letter from the dying artist to his publisher, wherein he adjures the latter "in my death agony" to destroy all the obscene sketches. Numerous illustrations to the Morte Darthur, recently in the possession of John Lane, of London, and a collection of the best later originals, belong to Jerome Pollitt, a friend of Beardsley.



AUBREY BEARDSLEY:
L'EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE
FROM THE "YELLOW BOOK"

seamed with roses, and under them her saucy leg, peeping out from drawers indicated by dots; then Harlequin in a white domino with his mask before his cunning eyes, tiptoeing forward in beautifully embroidered tights. Then follow the worthy Doctor and the fantastic Pantaloon in his wide velvet breeches and Spanish doublet. Columbine listens to the breathing of Pierrot and motions the others to silence with her finger upon her little mouth; Harlequin, too, is taken aback and lays a monitory finger on his lips, the doctor stands stiff and dignified, while Pantaloon bows his head breathlessly. Thus they stand upon tiptoe, scarce daring to look, and listen as Pierrot's spirit gently leaves his audacious body.

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Beardsley belongs to the generation immediately following that of ourselves, who are between forty and fifty years of age. It is a generation which in the intervals of schooling has accomplished what was an eternal puzzle to mature men like ourselves, and at the age of twenty is more educated than we are now, and a hundred times more imaginative than we can ever hope to become. The members of this generation are to be found everywhere, in London, in Paris, and in Germany. They are more refined and distinguished than we. They make verses where we struggled, and suffer where we rejoiced. We might christen them "Superboys," if it were not an injustice, for they are all that they would be; precocious princes who have learnt the art of government before attaining their manhood; artists who conventionalise where we worked with all the fiery enthusiasm of objective realism; aristocrats who carelessly greet us poor creatures with a gesture, polish their nails with that attention which we devoted to art, and write verses with the passion that we brought to love.

Whether they will survive is another question; they have some life in them—more, indeed, than we formerly had; such at least is their opinion. They are spared our late regret that we passed through half our lives with blinkers before our eyes, and notwithstanding their butterfly existence they will probably leave behind clearer if more transitory traces of their work than we left with all the intensity of our more plebeian existence.

There is nothing surprising in Beardsley's direct influence upon the artists who work in his genre. The facility which could follow every chance whim, and which brought such a delicate convention to every task, was certain to attract many. He was assimilated most readily abroad and most rapidly in America.

The publishing trade in the United States is naturally in close and constant relations with England. The more important London publishers all have their branches in New York or Boston, while the Americans are also able to sell their books in London. American printing from a technical point of view is far superior to ours, and photographic reproductions have been developed in popular publications to a pitch of perfection which we do not attain in éditions de luxe. On the other hand, no native style of book-illustration has yet been formed which surpasses the English style. It is only in a certain type of grotesque that an individual American character is to be found, as in the delightful little magazine, "The Lark," which prints on coarse paper the most amusing things illustrated by the maddest pictures, negro pantomimes and so forth.* The book-illustration is a coarser

* Published, among others, by W. Doxey in San Francisco. J. M. Bowles, in Boston, has also produced similar illustrations, if I am not misinformed, and here, without illustrations, one of the best printed American

variety of the English manner. The English artists who design for the American publishers are not of the highest class and take no particular pains to secure a reputation abroad. Anning Bell is, if possible, even more popular in America than in England. Among others he illustrated the great ecclesiastical work, "The Altar Book," with which a Boston publisher * vainly attempted to overshadow Morris, a very clumsy performance. An infinite number of other illustrators follow the style invented in London.† Here, too, the best books are those which are not illustrated.

Beardsley exerted a special influence upon W. H. Bradley; shortly after his first drawings had appeared in the "Yellow Book," Bradley printed his first book covers, large surfaces with bold borders, reminding us of the covers of the "Yellow Book," but simpler and with larger curves. One of the most beautiful was the cover for the December number (1894) of "The Inland Printer" of Chicago, a red-haired woman bearing a light, with the colours brilliantly divided.‡

This increase of size, led obviously to the poster, in which Bradley and many others turned Beardsley's methods to account, and it was most successfully employed by Bradley in the "Chap Book" poster. This form adopted those methods which could be most naturally and rapidly employed, but remained entirely out of touch with the deeper side of Beardsley, which found no sympathy in America. It was inevitable that the atmosphere of this brilliant artist should be discovered by more delicate talents which attempted to realise the world of marionettes.

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It is difficult and certainly of no great interest to consider who has actually borrowed from Beardsley. It would undoubtedly be wrong if we judged by appearances and described this man or that as the artistic descendant of Aubrey Beardsley, who was but a clerk in an insurance office in the City at a time when many Englishmen were already making drawings which strongly remind us of his manner, and were succeeded by others who resemble him even more closely. Beardsley's ideas were in the air; he grasped them better than any other, indeed, with unique effect. As a black-and-white artist he has no equal in modern England. Whether the others achieved what they did with or without his assistance is little to the point, seeing that he is superior to them all. It is only when one goes outside of his own narrow sphere, the book, that one finds things which approach the same level or show something of the same spirit. A kindred artist is still living in England who was certainly closely allied to Beardsley, and who can conjure the same graceful charm out of a different material; this is Charles Conder. Here Beardsley's superiority is more purely physical. Conder is as idle as his

books appeared, R. B. Gruelle's "Notes, Critical and Biographical," a masterpiece of high class printing of the utmost simplicity and in the best taste, dealing with the collection of W. T. Walters, in Baltimore; six copies were printed for the owner by Carlon and Hollenbeck at Indianopolis. The title-pages and the initials are from designs by Bruce Rogers.

* The initial letters were designed by B. G. Goodhue, who has also worked for English books. He is responsible for the borders as well. The book was printed at the Devinne Press in Boston, which has produced a number of the best American books, including a work upon the American printing trade; "Sketches of Printers and Printing in Colonial New York," by Hildeburn. "The Altar Book" was published by Berkeley Updike in Boston.

† G. W. Edwards, Frank Mills Day, M. Corter, Ethel Reed, Frost, L. J. Rhead, F. M. Parrish, E. Penfield, J. M. Ball, B. Sherwin, &c.

‡ Many of Bradley's drawings were made for the publications of Harper Bros., in New York. At a later date Bradley printed from his own press.

unfortunate compatriot was industrious, is as unmethodical as the other was methodical, is a Bohemian in practice, whereas Beardsley was lax only intellectually. None the less, Conder has produced one or two admirable works which will preserve his memory as a distinguished artist, if they themselves survive.

Paper for Beardsley was a white surface which cried out for printer's ink, and what paper was to him silk is to Conder. Conder's pictures are as colourless as Beardsley's. His brush only achieves beauty when it is gliding over the silk. This is in so far a disadvantage as it limits his effects and obliges him to renounce those popular suggestions which proceed from the artist and return to him with redoubled force, unfolding fresh resources. Conder's work, even were he more industrious than he is, would naturally appeal only to the few. He is unimaginable without his silken medium; nothing is more remarkable than this idiosyncrasy. He paints upon silk exactly as Degas puts his pastels upon paper, and as the pastels cannot be conceived in any other material, so approximately is Conder fettered to the peculiar faint sheen of his silk. He seems the reincarnation of some delicate eighteenth-century painter, who adorned the fans of the ladies who walked in the park of Versailles. But the truth is that Conder has as much and as little to do with these men as Beardsley with the Empire. He does not paint the eighteenth century as it was, but as we like to imagine it. He conventionalises our sensations and uses colour just as Beardsley for his interpretations used the black stroke, which gave exactly what we wished to see. His painting is as minute as the microscopic points and strokes of the designer of *Lysistrata*, it is as effective as the art of his predecessor. Its strength lies in the wonderful feeling of space which pervades these diminutive worlds and in an application of colour which forces the observer to magnify the effect produced by these delicate spots of lilac, yellow, brown, green and red. His art lies not only in the distribution of his touches with an inimitable sense of rhythm, but in the vivacity he imparts to them by letting the lighter and the darker shades run together, and thus still further emphasising the rhythm. A romantic water-colour, a heroic landscape upon silk, a smiling comedy, might be admirably conceived and wretchedly executed, and we are inclined at times to think that the slightest lapse of taste would destroy the whole illusion. This dexterity, which keeps its balance on the blade of a knife, is the only thing which Conder has in common with the eighteenth century. He belongs to it as Fragonard belongs, for the reason that close to him we divine a dreary abyss of mannerism.

Conder, like Sickert, the best pupil of Whistler, is not of pure English blood. He was born in Australia, and was brought up on French art and the French genius, and seems indeed to have been especially favoured by the most charming of the French muses. It is no more possible, however, to conceive of him as pure French than as pure English. Equally alien to either nation is that lofty modesty, which accomplishes upon a narrow fragment of silk, achievements never attained in great pictures by such Englishmen as Frank Brangwyn, or such Frenchmen as Menard. The great artists of France have, indeed, always produced bibelots. Monet painted door-panels for Durand-Ruel, Renoir decorated vases, and Degas painted the plates which hang on Alexis Rouart's staircase. These, however, were but amusements, the delicate pastimes of genius and if these men, like Lautrec, painted dainty fans for their nieces, their usual occupations were different. This kind of art, however, is Conder's business. He has extraordinary tact in avoiding any exaggeration of his claims and a happy gift of getting all the

charm out of his technique. He stands far above his productions, though his hand is obvious in every one of them, after the manner of Beardsley, who could guide a pencil with his little finger alone, yet did not disdain to take pains over every dot in his laces. Beardsley remains more English than Conder, notwithstanding his greater versatility. The naïve attempt to make something truly female out of the femininity of English art draws Conder rather towards the banks of the Seine. Here, too, he was first appreciated. When Bing opened his L'Art Nouveau, the long, narrow silken panels of the Englishman were hung in a mysterious corner of the house. In every room the visitor had seen nothing but things whose object was to express the new age and then, as he passed from the bedroom with the Denis into the narrow boudoir at the further end of the first storey, where the silk displayed its sheen between white Louis Seize panels, he was met by the roguish laughter of another world. Only a very few people ever saw them at all. The opponents of modernity never got so far ; in the Van de Velde rooms they had had enough of Neo-Impressionism and turned away in disgust. Enthusiasts, on the other hand, regarded the silk with suspicion as an offshoot of Versailles and shunned its seductions.

The painter Thaulow has some beautiful curtains and cushions by the Englishman. The painter Blanche, in whose house many exquisite little things are to be found side by side with great works, and who owns the best Parisian collection of Walter Sickert's pictures, has also some of the gems of Conder's work. Many examples occur in private collections in London, and among them are some beautiful fans.

Between Beardsley and Conder, the Russian, Constantin Somoff, has found a place. He does in oil what they did respectively in black-and-white and in water-colour, an achievement for which both Beardsley and Conder lacked the inclination and perhaps also the equipment.

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The genius of English art at the present day seems rather a collecting and distributing influence than a true creative power ; it collects and distributes at least all that it finds congenial. We find it rejecting everything manly offered by great individualities, even such achievements as those of Stevens, which would seem akin to its nature. Its greatest performance within the last twenty-five years has been the creation of a well-printed book, a new empire, within which Beardsley moved with the dignity of a prince. It was hoped in England that this empire would be extended to include more practical necessities. Morris made the attempt with a closely articulated form, which, by producing a soothing impression of outward order, concealed its lack of power. Others there were who attempted in their more material way to realise the variegated life which Beardsley had called into being, and to create a reality out of the mirage of their dreams. The movement took place in Scotland, where some years previously the Glasgow youths had displayed their dexterity in the manufacture of artistic movements. The new men, Macdonald, Macintosh, MacNair, &c., were but a few years younger than the favourites of the Munich people and were already working when the latter began to acquire a reputation in Germany. At that time they were in advance of Continental ideas. Ten years ago during the Munich Secession, there would have been much astonishment had George Henry, Roche, Paterson and others sent over, along with their own pictures, a few specimens of what was even then being produced in Glasgow in the immediate neighbourhood of their studios.





CHARLES CONDER: DESIGNS FOR FANS

Startling as the difference may seem between these contemporary painters and draughtsmen, there are many fundamental points of agreement. Even George Henry and his friends are decorators ; they drape their pictures after the manner of the prudent housewife, who seeks to confer new charms on shabby furniture by the application of Persian shawls. George Henry's pictures were like Japanese rooms which seem genuine at a distance, and in Germany were at any rate a great improvement on the Makart bouquets of the preceding generation. The Scottish draughtsmen are men of more refined taste. The painters inevitably become decorators of moderate capacity, while the decorators, on the contrary, nearly reach the level of painters and are artists from the beginning.

In Glasgow English art lost its hermaphrodite character. It passed into the hands of women. Two sisters, Margaret and Frances Macdonald, exhibited at the London Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the spring of 1896, the same exhibition whose opening was saddened by the death of Morris. Their first works were narrow panels of aluminium and brass, characterised by extremely attenuated ornament consisting of slim, highly conventionalised Madonnas. To Londoners the " Spooky School " seemed at first no more than a bad joke. These Madonnas had nothing English about them. The emphatic aureoles round the egg-shaped heads were regarded as a satire upon Pre-Raphælite pietism, which had recently received decent burial. The bodies disappeared in garments of mathematical perpendicularity like those of the mummies of the Pharaohs, or else they consisted of a few curving lines which defied all anatomy. Foreigners, however, were delighted, for they were weary of the eternal commonplace of the other exhibits, and they found at last in these things a new mode of expression and a bold revolt against the persistent norm. The abnormality of these productions was in itself a relief. There was an obvious enthusiasm in them ; they were the joyous work of people who had something to say, and who had not merely observed a detail here and there casually, but had constructed for themselves a definite picture of the world, however curious it might be. The curious element, indeed, was by no means arbitrary. These works used the new drawing to express larger and wider surfaces than had been seen in London. The treatment of the nimbus certainly appeared arbitrary ; it was placed where it would look well, and not where sentimentalism required it. The faces were long, not because they were intended to symbolise some intellectual sublimation, but because the panels were long and the artists preferred to work with simplified unities instead of telling stories. The architect Mackintosh, who had meanwhile married one of the two sisters, had also exhibited ; he was more English than the ladies, but by no means so original. The few pieces of furniture which he showed might have been made by Voysey if it had not been for the ornament of their surfaces. His ornament, moreover, was not so attractive ; it crept across the solidly bordered surface with nothing of the proper swing, or ran out into lines which seemed laboured. It was the work of a man who had been accustomed to another style, and who was doing his best to avoid a relapse into his old manner. The delightful element in the work of the ladies was their bold carelessness, and a taste which was as wholly consistent with an utterly remote world as if it had never seen any other.

The eclecticism which Ricketts and his friends deliberately attempted to bring into favour was no novelty to the more naïve posterity of Walter Scott, and lost much of its many-sidedness in consequence. The primitive style of the Scots

women is entirely unconscious ; it is simply the expedient of a woman without the innate prepossessions of the male artist who attempts things which would never occur to a man. Mrs. Mackintosh used to produce conventionalised roses by crumpling paper or muslin with her fingers, smoothing out the lines with feminine taste. She makes her panels of canvas and colour, not because she desires to paint, but for lack of better material. The strokes upon her pictures are like strings. She abstracts all the charm from the technique of gesso-painting, and unconsciously imitates everything you can think of, but as she has not been spoiled by training charming ideas are the result. This feminine taste rounded off the corners of the furniture made in Glasgow and gave more repose to the constructive lines of Mackintosh, who remained above all an excellent architect. MacNair, Talwyn, Morris, and others complete the group.

Ornamental work was naturally the central point of the innovation. Books and posters rapidly popularised a style which shows a remarkable likeness to certain Continental performances, especially those of the Dutch school, which derives from allied exotic sources. MacNair's glass is very similar to some domestic glass by Koepping, while his windows are akin to Van de Velde's, though there is no question of borrowing. The Scots accomplished a simplification comparable with that which on the Continent followed upon the flower-like prettiness of Japanese art, but the romantic spirit of their country enabled them to retain certain leading features of their models which were capable of interpretation, though on a very much reduced scale. Even in objects of every-day use they were unable to get rid of every trace of symbolism, and their style was formed out of a kind of compromise which no longer recalls natural objects to the memory, but cannot yet afford to break entirely with the visible world.

In Glasgow the charm of all this was great, especially when one had just come from London. Meanwhile the Scots had exhibited on the Continent, at first at Vienna in the winter of 1900, and two years later at Turin. The few fragmentary rooms exhibited in Turin were apartments in exquisite taste. Tiny pieces of furniture stood upon white cloths which served as carpets, while there were little chairs with very low seats and high backs covered with different shades of lilac. Artificial flowers of coloured paper with glass buds decorated the tables ; electric bulbs were hung upon long parallel threads, while as decoration for the walls, coloured birds' eggs large and small, were hung at regular intervals, the intention of which proved a great puzzle to the onlookers, though they seemed to me an entirely intelligible, indeed, a necessary symbol. To prostitute these things to everyday use would be a mistake, and I was always horrified when I saw my German acquaintances shambling through these quiet rooms. The eye rested here with delight ; these were intellectual chambers garnished for fair souls, not for corporeal habitation.

The inevitable consequence came upon the Scots even more rapidly than might have been expected. After a poetry which stammered, a music which aimed at a tumult of sound, a painting which was content with chords of colour, a sculpture which renounced mere form, a dematerialised architecture was bound to arise. Its discoverers are perhaps the cleverest people of all, as they fly most directly in the face of Nature and can most easily be ridiculed. The powers of abstraction possessed by our art passes beyond the usual limits in their hands ; the luxury which would create not merely pictures and statues, but the whole environment for the poet's figures, is certainly the most regal of all attempts

of the kind. To characterise it as unpractical would be shortsighted. It deserves such a reproach as little as Beardsley's drawings, which retain a value apart from that illustrative purpose which they fulfil better than the Scots fulfil their tasks. They deepen knowledge in a manner that may some day bear fruit. The effect is as permanent and as real as that produced by the perfect acting of a play, though the action represented may rest upon wholly imaginary hypotheses. The still-life of Scottish furniture may, indeed, only serve for the moment to show Continental competitors what to avoid if they want to make sensible interiors. At the same time, however, it displays an artistic taste which, merely pictorial as it is, points to an ideal the demonstration of which is always valuable, though we lack the organs to use it.

Thus England, to whom Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Constable have proved useless, is at last creating out of utilitarian objects the fantastic chimæra of a new form of beauty.



AUBREY BEARDSLEY. VIGNETTE FROM "THE PIERROT OF THE MINUTE."



AUBREY BEARDSLEY. THE DEATH OF PIERROT,
FROM "THE SAVOY."

THE STYLISTIC MOVEMENT ON THE CONTINENT

FRANCE

On the Continent vain attempts are being made to discover the plan on which England built her new house. Up to a certain point the poverty of English art had been a positive advantage to Morris. His outlook was confined by no abstract æsthetic specialism; artists were not obliged to surrender anything in order to follow him, and since the Gothic period architecture had produced nothing which could efface the great memories enshrined in Westminster Abbey, the national sanctuary of London, which drew men's minds back to ancient times. Morris and his generation were therefore able to discover a means of expression, which had at any rate one advantage—a definite unity. This advantage reacted upon the Continent where, notwithstanding the infinitely greater artistic wealth, any kind of system was impossible and where, therefore, it was necessary to accept the importation of this new style even in cases where English art was wholly exotic in character, or in other words had nothing in common with the history of the country.

The importance which the people, notoriously the weakest of modern times in artistic genius, thus acquired, is amusing in its way; it was not Morris himself who provided the material for importation, but one of his least important satellites. In the land of Poussin and Ingres the English predominance became grotesque.

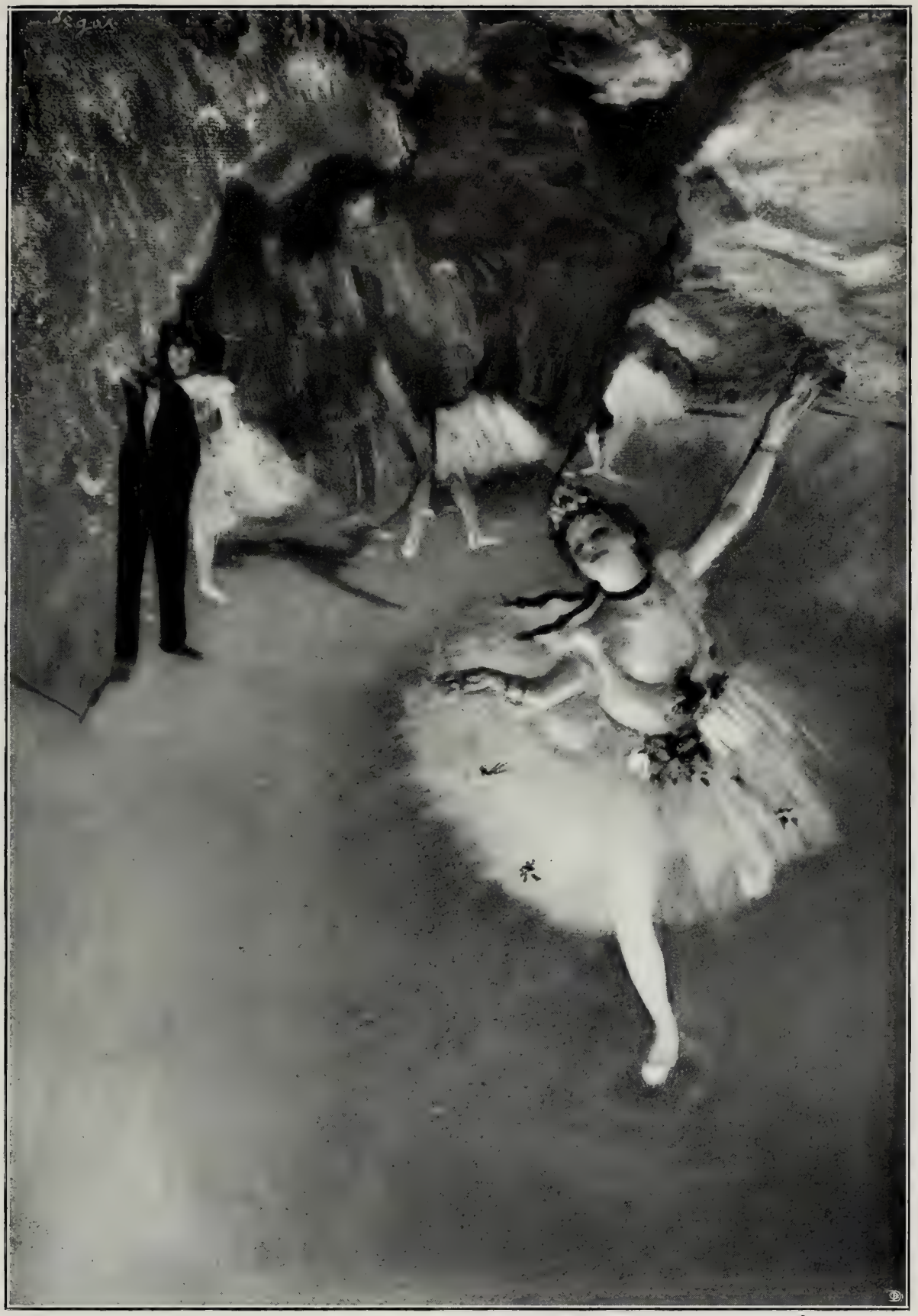
France is like the house of some rich collector; pictures from floor to ceiling, so that not an inch of the wall can be seen, statues in every corner, upon the chimneypieces, everywhere; panels by great painters upon the doors; transparencies with famous signatures in the windows; costly bibelots for furniture, and contorted nudes by Rodin for door handles. A new instinct has in fact arisen which shuns utility in every form and which makes people ready to face the wildest sacrifices and inconveniences in order to have nothing about them which does not suggest the connoisseur. This development has nothing in it of snobbery or vain-glory or of any other morbid view of life. It proceeds from the curious relationship between the amateur and the artist of which I spoke at the outset of this book. In France, the country of the collector, this relationship has been carried to a surprising pitch of intensity. The house of the amateur is in France nothing more than a studio on a large scale, the workshop of a man who has undertaken the task of collecting and preserving the precious productions of others. The Revolution cut off the grands seigneurs; our art has no longer any need of them. It is a matter of indifference where a Degas or a Renoir is hung; one takes it in one's hand and becomes oblivious of all else. True connoisseurship in France is anything rather than an aristocratic spirit; it belongs rather to the kitchen of

art. The connoisseur who is obliged to keep in close touch with the artist so that his appreciation may be as keen as possible, catches something of the artist's nature. For humanity it is of the utmost importance that the artist should be undisturbed by his surroundings and should think only of his painting, that he may produce as much as possible; the amateur, therefore, as the trainer of the artist, feels himself obliged to get the last ounce out of him. Thus indeed he fulfils the object of his existence; were it not for him, our artists and sculptors would cease to exist. It is nothing but fidelity to his calling if he invests hundreds of thousands in works of art and stints himself and his family, if he goes about in an old and ragged coat and travels third class to auctions outside Paris, as a collector recently deceased was accustomed to do. For art his money increases its value a hundredfold, since it forms the greater part of the capital upon which art can count.

This instinct has been trained for generations, and in many cases has been transmitted from father to son, even though the object of the passion for collecting may change. To some extent it is a national characteristic. The Louvre Museum was founded in the terrible year 1793. While a victorious enemy was devastating the country David ventured to propose to the Convention that the old royal palace should be transformed into a national museum, and his proposal was accepted on the very day on which Valenciennes, the last fortress of the North, fell into the hands of the Austrians. To have a miniature Louvre in his own house is the dream of every citizen. I know the concierge of a private house, whose lodge is a mouse-trap a few metres wide and has been the home of his family for twenty years, but it contains several Corots and a number of brilliant drawings by Daumier, which he has picked up from time to time at the Hôtel Drouot.

Not only has the amateur no money for other purposes, but he has no instinct whatever for the beauty of utilitarian objects.

For the formation of a collection, respectable according to Parisian ideas, so much intelligence is required, such iron industry and perseverance, that one finds it hard to understand how the owner finds time for any other business. He therefore leaves all the rest to others and, as he is the sole part of the nation accessible to artistic ideas, the rest is forgotten or arranged according to tradition. The importance attached to tradition in the most revolutionary country in the world, whose social progress justly arouses general admiration, is almost incredible. The smallest greengrocer, nay, the thief who spends his nights in the ditches of the fortifications, clings firmly to his Louis XV., and the fairest of his dreams is to spend his midday rest in a modern imitation of the chair in which the oppressors of the people once sat. The ferocity of the Jacobins extirpated the outward and visible signs of monarchy only so long as they lacked a salon to set them up in, and they are defended to-day with greater fury than was once brought to their destruction. Deep as is the popular reverence for Napoleon, the Empire style is for France a mere phantasmagoria, which only the richness of its bronzes made tolerable. A dozen Napoleons would not bring about the acceptance of a more rational form. Should the State conceive the idea of imposing such a form by force, it would have to face, not a question of æsthetics, but a revolution, and in my opinion it would be easier for the Government to carry out its Republican programme to its utmost extremity than to induce the true Parisian to renounce his favourite style. Logically speaking, modern ideas can imply nothing but the strongest opposition to all the traditions of the age which luxuriated in the



DEGAS: A DANCER ON THE STAGE (DANSEUSE EN SCÈNE)
PASTEL
LUXEMBOURG, PARIS

gardens of Versailles; not only in this republican country but everywhere, and whether in connection with art or anything else. It is obvious that the two great generations of French painters symbolise this opposition. Delacroix, Daumier, Millet, Courbet, Manet, Degas and Gauguin, are, so to speak, the strongholds of a modern sense of freedom opposed to all royalism. Their pictures could have been conceived only by independent minds, and would have been clear evidence of their attitude, even if their authors had appeared as supporters of the old régime.

Possibly the class which rejected them felt the force of their protest, though without full consciousness of its deeper significance, and while people were crying out about the *Massacre* and scoffing at the hideousness of the *Casseurs de Pierres* and the nudity of the *Olympia*, they were in reality raising barriers against the first approach of the new representatives of our age. The heart of the genial amateur is naturally quite hardened against these obvious symptoms. He regards the modern pictures he collects from the standpoint of the kitchen, is delighted by their originality and their personal note, and finds, moreover, in his favourites, so strong a reminiscence of the masters of the past that he never perceives a significance in this art beyond the picture-frames. He takes a pleasure in calling Delacroix the Rubens of our age, Manet its Velazquez, and Renoir its Fragonard; he borrows terms from the kitchen to express their community of aim, and remains unaffected by the profound meaning which the moderns have for their own age. What is still more remarkable is that these great artists themselves are often unconscious of their heroic stature. They carefully shut themselves up in their studios, and this indeed is often the only thing they can do; when they appear, it sometimes happens that they come forward to demonstrate against movements which work entirely in their direction. In the famous "Affaire," the great artists were on the side of the reaction, and Zola was abandoned by the men on whose behalf he had broken many a lance in the enthusiasm of his youth. The counterpart of this spirit is the tragical comedy to which Menzel devotes himself among ourselves. The want of critical power in matters artistic displayed by this and many other leaders springs from the same obscure source. In the case of our great artists, who are rightly praised for their struggles for humanity one is sometimes forced to leave the man morally and very often æsthetically speaking out of the question. They know the morality which constrains them to sacrifice everything to their art, the æsthetics which urge them to give charm to their works. They carry their heroism further than any artistic generation in the past has done, so far, indeed, that they have no energy for anything else.

This is the reason why French art is great and French general æsthetics as a rule beneath contempt. The taste which displays its inimitable nobility and its inexorable logic in the works of the French School, becomes a sort of faint-hearted compromise the moment that it attempts to deal with anything but a work of art. It is not exactly bad, for it always retains certain of the innate qualities which constitute the chic of a French toilette.

Nothing more deeply impressed the few Frenchmen who were not content to live and die on the Boulevard than the superiority which England enjoyed owing to her possession of logical principles of taste. They overlooked the irreconcilable racial difference, the fact that the situation in England was exactly the reverse of what it was in France, and that for this very reason, it could not be reproduced there. In England art was feminine, essentially calculated for women,

but the prevailing taste was virile. In France, on the other hand, there was a manly æsthetic tradition carried on wholly by men, while the taste of the time was feminine, and kept itself as far as possible removed from the centres of production.

To import English ideas into France was to run counter to a deeply seated French instinct, to demand of Frenchmen something more intolerable than if one had forced them to strike up a friendship with Germany. England is their hereditary enemy, not Germany. They have already acquired a taste for our musicians and for the classics of our poetic literature; they regard us as essentially bons enfants whom the wicked Bismarck led astray. But England has nothing which has the slightest charm for the true Frenchman. He perambulates London as he would another world, and the whole nature of the English is as incomprehensible to him as their speech.

Thus the influence of England on Paris—to say nothing of France—remained entirely superficial. It did not touch a single artist. It did not even succeed in regenerating French book-production where its effects were most to be desired, and where the superiority of England was least questionable. In 1880 Crane's picture books had already appeared in Paris in a French edition. In the same year Kate Greenaway's "Under the Window" was translated and had a great success. Huysmans praised Caldecott as the successor of Thomas Rowlandson and Cruikshank. These volumes had an immense sale as Christmas presents, but they never got beyond the sphere of the livre d'etrennes. The printer at best learned a lesson in chromolithography; serious publishers ignored them.

Even now French books, so far as they occupy the attention of artists, are merely collections of illustrations, and show a sovereign disregard for the most elementary principles of typography. In Paris there has been no tolerable example of printing on the market for the last fifty years. Not one of the great generation of French caricaturists who spent their lives in making illustrations ever dreamed of doing work specially suitable for a book. Gustave Doré, the favourite in Germany and in England, who in his "Contes Drolatiques" and other similar examples came nearest to fulfilling the necessary conditions, was the least gifted artist of them all. Since his time they have been producing either picture books in the homelier romantic vein or volumes of sketches. The drawings are reproduced as faithfully as possible in line by means of woodcuts; France, even since the death of the great Léveillé, has still a fine array of wood engravers, In 1896 they even ventured to publish a remarkable periodical called "L'Image" * which for a whole year produced a very valuable series of plates after modern artists without a single page of letterpress.

There is no country in which bibliomania engulfs such enormous sums as in France. Bing's Book Exhibition in the Spring of 1896 revealed a positively monstrous luxury displayed in illustrations consisting of original drawings by the greatest artists and similar excesses. In the following year the Goncourt sale exposed to the eyes of the curious the treasures of the library possessed by the two most celebrated of French connoisseurs. On that occasion bindings of certain precious editions were sold which these two eighteenth-century enthusiasts had

* The single volume was published by Floury under the direction of the woodcutters, T. Beltrand A. Lepère, and L. Ruffe of the "Corporation des Graveurs sur bois," and included reproductions of Rodin, Carrière, Degas, Daumier and others. Some examples of German wood-engraving were also published by this corporation.

had painted in oil by Renoir, Carrière and others. One did not dare lay a finger on them!

Of course there is no lack of artists capable of producing plates suitable for the illustration of books, under the guidance of a good publisher. G. Auriol * M. Dufrène † and the artists mentioned apropos of Gauguin, Ranson,‡ and Jossot, § the Sharaku of France, have skill enough. Vollard, who had the text of Maurice Denis's "Imitation" printed on the hand-presses of the Imprimerie Nationale and who ordered the exquisite Elzevir type of the days of Villon to be recast for Bonnard's "Parallèlement," produced works in the best taste without making them into books.

It is only in book-binding that the French maintain the old tradition of handicraft for which they are so famous, and it is significant that their "finishers" still use the old stamps, or, if they modify their models at all, do so in strict accordance with the tradition.

Grasset was the French Crane, and was no better, but a great deal stiffer, than the Englishman. Crane may have reminded him of Viollet-le-Duc, and he may have attempted a new development of French Gothic in flat ornament. His school, to which Follot, among others, belonged, has not been fruitful. Felix Aubert, the designer of many French textiles and the resuscitator of Chantilly point lace, has tried flat ornament with greater modesty and at least equal success.

There are a hundred sources in Paris from which the most unbridled luxury may draw satisfaction; simple and useful things are not to be had for love or money. The prestige of a Lalique who can put the poetry of the "Thousand and one Nights" into a jewel, of a Gallé who succeeds at times in recreating the glory of Chinese glass, and of a hundred other makers of bibelots who prepare the equipment of drawing-rooms is certainly well deserved, but it does not avail to hide the terrible emptiness which lies behind the luxury.

Even in industrial art inspiration comes only from the amateur. On him the influence of the English movement was nil. The eighteenth-century collector developed into the patron of modern art, and refined his taste by contact with the minor arts of Japan. Edmond de Goncourt, who concluded a long series of literary works with lives of Utamaro and Hokusai, is typical of this development. Oriental influence was useful only to the great painters who in the best Parisian collections such as those of Camondo, Manzi, Rouart and many others find themselves side by side with the foremost artists of Nippon. Here Japanese art raised the standard still higher and profoundly influenced creation. At the same time it stimulated the engraving and the poster, the one means which the French artists have found of popularising their work without harming it. Rivière, one of the most popular of them, who made his impressions of Hieroshigé available in the schools, himself became almost Japanese in the process.

In France Japan played the revolutionary rôle which was played in England by Morris' Gothic. Bing, the founder of "L'Art Nouveau" was one of the finest

* Auriol has done some charming drawings for Larousse's firm.

† Dufrène makes pretty bindings and his ornaments are very delicate.

‡ Ranson is responsible for "Le Livre de la Naissance," by A. F. Hérold ("Mercure de France"), and other things.

§ Jossot, besides his well-known merciless posters, has produced several picture books, the best of which is "Artistes et Bourgeois" (Boudet, 1894). He also illustrated "Mince de Trognes" (G. Hazard, 1896), "Les Rats," after Heine ("La Critique," 1899), and "Femelles" (Ollendorff, 1901).

connoisseurs of Japanese art, and the first dealer who initiated importations from the East. So soon as the spirit of this art transcended the narrow limits of painting its influence was necessarily that which Morris had branded as dangerous. It wrought actual havoc in applied art, disintegrating a tradition already shaken. Louis Quatorze whorls burgeoned with Japanese blossoms. Architecture was neglected. Even now no French artist, apart from the professed architects, gives serious attention to this department and the few architects like De Baudot, Gout, Vaudremer and the rest who have for years been trying to popularise a rational style are hardly known, not to say supported, by any prominent painter or sculptor. It may even be said that they are carrying on their difficult task in opposition to the great art of modern France. The younger men like Bonnier, Plumet, the two Selmersheims, Dufrène and others are trying to mould the old grace into new forms. In his furniture De Feure conventionalises Louis Seize; Guimard, the only one of them who has completely freed himself from the old tradition, makes huge houses entirely composed of ornament. The modern element in the new French architecture is in the clouds; it is as superficial as the modern element in French painting is profoundly characteristic of this age. It would be unjust to hold the few men of courage among Parisian architects responsible for this. The spirit which produces a great architecture could not be created by individuals, however gifted. Creation depends on strong conceptions answering to imperious needs, and these are out of the question in a country whose art is dominated by collectors.

Yet in one respect, and that by no means the least important, the first impulse towards a new architecture came from France. It was in the Paris of Notre Dame and the Louvre that the importance of iron in modern architecture was first recognised. Viollet-le-Duc, and many modern spirits, his contemporaries and predecessors, recognised iron as the mother of new forms. More than fifty years ago the second Empire, as much out of sympathy with this as with the new world created by its young painters, beheld the Halles Centrales arise as the first intimation of a new age. "Ceci tuera cela," says Lantier in "Le Ventre de Paris" of the new iron building opposite the old Renaissance church of St. Eustache. There is a regular line of progression from the Halles to the iron palaces of the great Exhibitions. Yet the Eiffel Tower is a doubtful omen. It is no longer unpopular; people lay their account with it as with the Métropolitain. But if any one suggested to the Parisian of to-day that it was more than a curious makeshift, or that it was not far from the prestige still possessed by their darling Louis Quinze tradition he would find every one against him, Degas and Rodin no less than the bourgeoisie.



MAURICE DUFRÈNE. ORNAMENT.



G. MUNTHE: DESIGN FOR A CARPET



JOSSOT. VIGNETTE.

SCANDINAVIA

We shall see that in other countries the situation has in it an element of English influence and a dash of France. England's example roused the young men everywhere. The first thing they did was to grope after the ancients as a child seeks its mother when danger threatens. All countries which still had some feeling for the original art of their forefathers and were ashamed of the centuries they had spent in dependence on foreign, French, or " classic " influences, went back to the beginnings of their national art, went, in fact, as far back as they could, in order to deliver themselves from any foreign alloy. Gothic, as in England, was almost everywhere the end, or at least one of the ends, of every man's desire. In Scandinavia they went back if possible even further, and tried to reconstitute the semi-barbaric forms of the earliest Northern style. Gauguin's personal history is typical of all the decorative art of our time. Men were so weary of the outworn conventions which obtained, disgust at the ignoble borrowing of forms which were imported without regard to the individuality of the people and only because they happened to be convenient, grew so fast, that the most barbarous style was adopted with a veritable passion if only it showed any manifest difference from the flaccidity of the accepted order of things.

In Scandinavia the strength of the reaction was in direct proportion to the distance of the artist from Paris the unattainable. There were young men who, wearied by the long journey, began to realise that with the best will in the world they could not transport the atmosphere of the Louvre to Stockholm or Copenhagen, still less to Christiania, and that it was better to draw upon their own resources. The movement began in painting with a naturalisation of conception. The transference of the hegemony from the German to the French School—as represented in Norway by Normann and Heyerdahl—was an important beginning. The generation which exchanged Düsseldorf for Paris was more closely in touch with its native land. Thaulow was the one painter of note who settled down in Paris, and his attempt to be Norwegian and Parisian at the same time, and his failure to be either, may have had a deterrent effect. Werenskiold, eight years younger than Thaulow, brought Impressionism back with him when he returned home, and it is significant that he was the first artist of any eminence to illustrate Norwegian folk-lore. He had only to reproduce popular types sincerely in order to get decorative images. Gunnar Berg, one of the most talented of the younger generation, who was barely thirty when he died, set up his studio in the late eighties on Svolvaer, a tiny island in the Lofoden group, where it was perched against a hill like a gaily coloured birdcage. There he produced his charming sketches of fishermen which have been too soon forgotten. His *Fisher War* which was exhibited in Berlin, in the early nineties, if I remember rightly, was a vivid impression of Nature—a little painted epic. Shortly afterwards Gerhard

Munthe, a much older man, also a fellow student of Werenskiold's in the Munich days, reacted strongly and deliberately upon the dawning naturalism, and produced a wonderful series of pictures full of angular and fluttering lines, a representation of the legends of the peasantry in the gay colours with which they are wont to paint their cabins on the seashore. Their geometrical design required a coarser technique than painting. They were, in fact, designs for tapestry, and hands were very soon found which were capable of weaving them. *

Much the same thing, strongly individualised in each case, happened in all the Scandinavian countries. Morris' programme was carried out with the greatest zeal as far as it was possible in Copenhagen and Stockholm. The handicrafts of the people were re-established. Societies were founded for the preservation of forgotten national traditions and for the collection of examples of the best periods. That the movement should make rapid progress is impossible, owing to the economic limitations of these countries. The art has not the advantage, possessed by the art of England, of being supported by a powerful and sympathetic literary propaganda. No doubt the early works of Ibsen, Björnstjerne Björnson, Holger Drachmann, and the rest, gave Scandinavian art its first impulses towards nationalism; but it has been so long about following up these suggestions that in the meantime the poets have gone off on another track. The literary school which dominates Scandinavia to-day, the psychological school of Strindberg, Arne Garborg, Knut Hamsum, Heiberg and others, is the typical expression of a country averse from the formative arts. The extraordinary concentration which constitutes the charm of this sort of literature would indeed be impossible without some sacrifice. The greatest critic of Scandinavia, George Brandes, restricts himself to literature; and in Germany the continental movement which he has started finds its supporters in intellectual but non-artistic circles.

The movement in Denmark is older and already embraces a wider field. Here also it started with the painters who took to illustrative art, such as the two Skovgaards and the two Slot-Möllers, and others whose pictures were as detestable as their drawings were excellent. The architect Bindesböll was the centre of the circle, though it must be admitted that his department has as yet accomplished least. Throughout Scandinavia the development of new forms in architecture is proceeding very slowly. The comparative simplicity of the older work has in it nothing which would precipitate a reaction, and the demands of comfort, which naturally accelerate change, are here still far behind those of the rest of Europe, though Nyrup's stately Town Hall in Copenhagen has no doubt given an impetus to the propaganda in favour of a national style.

Bindesböll's ornament with its bold outlines is at its best when used to decorate one of his coarse plates which one hangs on the wall like a painting. Articles of common use are made practically only in their most luxurious form, fine porcelain, pretty books with even prettier bindings. †

* Most of these designs were carried out by Frau Frida Hausen, who also worked from designs of her own. The Princess Tenischeff of St. Petersburg possesses the finest examples of Norwegian tapestries. Jens Thiis, director of the small museum at Trondhjem, who is also eminent as a critic (*cf.* his concise summary of Norwegian art in "La Norvège" for 1900), has founded a school of weaving in that town.

† Hendriksen has done good work for binding in founding a school of that art. Besides Bindesböll, J. L. Flegge, H. Tégner, Lundbye, Kund Larsen, and others, have designed fine, simple stamps for the volumes bound by Flegge, Clement and Anker Kyster.

Willumsen provided the new art with more refined æsthetics, which had been fortified in Paris by the study of Gauguin. A more consciously decorative style arose out of the national symbolism. Willumsen makes use of sculpture, painting and carving with equal propriety. His monumental sculpture, of which a brilliant example was shown at the International Exhibition of 1900, follows the Egyptian tradition; it has no detail and is made up of broad surfaces. His danger is the danger to which all transition artists are exposed who have fought their way to a comprehension of the laws that govern monumental art. He is apt to express only the law, not the intelligence which the law has purified. Artists who come from countries without a strong tradition—Willumsen in Scandinavia, Hodler in Switzerland and several that one could name in Germany—are always apt to bore us with stock clichés of subject or action, owing to their lack of rational purpose. They have no faith in the fiction of a reproduction of nature which is the first condition of pictorial art. The Dane Hansen-Jacobsen is typical of this attitude of mind. He made a style of ornament for himself out of the grotesque figures of the Trolls of Danish folk-lore which he simplified again and again, not in order to subject it to some structural scheme but constrained by the irresistible law of the economy of material, until he finally evolved the conception of his *Militarism*, also exhibited in 1900, that monstrous figure composed of bayonet edges rising from a heap of skulls. Artists like this necessarily miss their connection; they go their way guided by pure instinct. When I once remarked to Hansen-Jacobsen that his work might be very useful to the architects he was astonished beyond measure. They strip their works of all the conditions of abstract art, and they are hardly aware that they have finally reduced it to pure mathematics. These simple people merely need a few rays of sense from without to illuminate the fog of thought which darkens their studios. Sometimes only a new material is wanted to complete the abstraction which makes nonsense in a framed picture. The factory of Bing and Gröndahl in Copenhagen, in which Willumsen undertook the supervision of the modelling, at once became a workshop of the most refined works of art after many years during which it had been inferior to the Royal Factory. Its success at the Universal Exhibition was unparalleled. The very ideas which in Willumsen's pictures leave one cold attracted every lover of beauty when expressed in the form of applied art. How many powers are locked up in silent studios consuming themselves and turning to morbid phenomena, which might have the most fruitful results in great industries!

It was from Denmark that about ten years ago the young generation in Germany received its first impulse towards decorative art. Leistikow profited by it from the ideal side, yet none the less effectually. The influence of Bindesböll on Eckmann's ornament is unmistakable.

Sweden lags behind; the Swedes are occupied in reproducing peasant art. The few artists they have are painters who, like Zorn, belong rather to Paris than to their own country. Those who aim at anything more original are undistinguished. Boberg, who is one of the few independent spirits, occasionally has happy ideas.

In Finland, art is becoming the cry of the enslaved consciousness of a nation. We do not understand their pictures because we have no time to read the Kalevala or the other Finnish epics. And yet their sombre rigidity is as impressive in its way as the battle pieces of primitive peoples.



DEGAS: A DANCER
FROM A WOODCUT BY ANDRIN

Axel Gallén's illustrative pictures are typical of this vein. The serious portraiture of the Finns is even more convincing. The psychology of a whole race is latent in the manner in which Gallén, Enhel, Jærenfelt and their fellows create their types. Louis Sparre is trying to organise the rise of a popular Finnish art for industry. Saarinen is the architect of the movement, which as yet can hardly be said to have achieved an independent form. But the fact remains that even now there are greater potentialities of artistic development in the small town of Helsingfors than in all the gigantic empire of Russia. Perhaps the new province will reveal European art to the Empire of the Czar.

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If one is not content to regard Scandinavian art as a symptom of the general spirit of activity and organisation prevalent in the North, and if one looks for actual contributions to the art treasures of Europe, its proportions are necessarily altered. There is one general feature in the art of all Scandinavian countries—the weakness of the connection of the rising generation of artists with the spirit of modern art. The young men have broken with Paris whither their predecessors went to school, and archaism flourishes nowhere as it does in Scandinavia, where our artistic contemporaries have returned to the gods of their national idolatry as the prodigal son returned to his father's bosom. For enthusiasm like theirs a century or a millennium is as the lifetime of a single man. They believed they could trace in themselves the life of the people who in the mists of antiquity created the original artistic forms of their race. The paralogism involved shows that the spirit which is in them is more primitive than that which has been found most profitable for the arts. They go back to their father but their hands are empty, and they expect him to bestow upon them the treasures which they have been too indolent to amass. The difference between such men as Zorn, Wereskiold and Thaulow, and the next generation who are no longer satisfied with the so-called naturalism of their predecessors, is exactly the difference between the art of Constable and that of the Pre-Raphaelites. They are throwing over, or at least they are in danger of throwing over, not merely painting but the pictorial. It is not simply that they are making no effort to surpass their elders; they are repudiating all æsthetic relations with them, and they imagine that they are entitled to do this by their acquaintance with the old forms, which they copy and reconstruct and combine in every possible way. Because in this way they are able to make a chair, a cradle or a pot, or at any rate things which have some resemblance to these objects, they believe themselves to be stronger than the older men, who were not interested in such things. When once they have evolved a decent house that has definite advantages over older houses, they conclude that all the art of the earlier generation is not worth sixpence. It is the Walter Crane spirit in another form, handled by a more robust race, with more robust ideals, but when all is said and done, it is equally unfruitful. We cannot learn the gestures of antiquity, for we have as little use for them as for the garments or the speech of our ancestors. A modern Norwegian would find it easier to arrive at an understanding, spiritually, intellectually, or physically, with a negro porter of San Francisco than with a Viking. All belief in the racial spirit which ignores evolution falls into superstition. Absolutely all that remains of the ancients is their art, and that any San Francisco negro can appreciate as well as a Norwegian, provided he has the

good fortune to possess artistic instincts. The " Norwegian spirit " has nothing to do with it. The racial quality which the Norwegian finds in an ancient work of Norse art is nothing but line and colour and action—things that a foreigner calls by a different name but understands quite as well. No doubt the creative genius of the native is more strongly stimulated by such works than that of the foreigner can be ; but progress does not come of the knowledge that such and such things arose among one's own people in primeval times, but of the consciousness of a continuous development from these antique days down to our own time. All other feelings on the subject are merely refined forms of curiosity, of archæology and sentimentalism. Now it is clear, without further demonstration, that such a development, if it is really progressive, such a consciousness, if it is really vital, cannot possibly deal with points of detail. What brain is big enough to contain all the thousands of modifications which come into being in a thousand years ? It is only the system and the resulting law which can take shape and produce an instinct. This is the work of tradition.

Very few of the Northern artists of our day impress us as having grasped this deeper significance of tradition. They are, rightly or wrongly, doubtful of the existence of this tradition after the Middle Ages, and they feel that they cannot do better than begin where they believe the break occurs. This atittude of mind is against Nature. One may be displeased with one's father—most people are—but one cannot make away with him. Their attempt to do so, if it were made in earnest, would involve getting themselves born again two thousand years sooner. But of course they are not in earnest ; it is mere make-believe, They wish to improve upon their parents' errors, and, as far as possible, to make good their deficiencies ; at the same time they do not wish to drop out of the present ; they even feel themselves to be moderns at heart, and desire to play their part in modern movements ; they are, in fact, creatures of compromise. But, compromise as they may, other elements than mere prudence determine the result. The modern, not by virtue of his racial instinct but by the power of his individual intellect, comes and sees what elements in the ancients are of use in the problems that we have now to face. He becomes a foreigner in his own country, the conqueror who profits soberly by the opportunity which puts instructive antique works in his way. He has certain obvious advantages over the actual foreigner ; he knows the ground better, and he knows every nook and corner of the national consciousness. The foreigner, however, when he is better equipped than the native, may be his superior, and in such a case even local knowledge will be of no avail. There have been cases in which one people has built up a great art with the resources of another people, and this because they took what was profitable and not what lay nearest to hand, while the heirs of the old masters stayed at home and produced nothing but rubbish. Indeed the examples in which foreigners have made more of a country's resources than its own citizens are so frequent, that we must regard the collision of aliens and natives as entirely advantageous. A study of history, from the Egyptians onward, has taught us to seek the salvation of cultures in the same way as that of races—by intermarriage.

From this point of view, then, it appears that the national method, if it is to have any good result, must depend on a mixture of elements. The art of a thousand years ago is so far from that of to-day that there is no fear of in-breeding. It

may be of service to the living, not because it is so near to them, but because it is so far away. We may ask ourselves whether the art of Munthe, Willumsen and Skovgaard really shows a sincere combination of the qualities of the men of to-day and those of the vanished world of our forefathers. It seems to me that in them several ancient worlds are brought together. In Munthe old Norwegian forms are mingled with geometrical patterns from the East. In Willumsen old Danish forms are combined with Egyptian and many other elements. Joachim Skovgaard's pictures of his own country are full of early Italian touches. Possibly one may find in many of the younger men an even greater number of elements, almost everything, in fact, but the modern, which is as indispensable as mortar to the mason.

The mosaic may be made up of an even greater number of components; there are artists in whom we divine, if we cannot demonstrate, the presence of all the artistic elements with which we are accustomed to deal. When we can demonstrate their presence we honour the artist all the more, for the more he borrows the richer he appears. It is no mere scientific pleasure to detect in Hokusai's drawings something akin to Rembrandt, to find in Rembrandt a trace of the plastic method of the early Greeks. It is a heightening of one's enjoyment, like the enrichment of a chord in music which the ear, by frequent hearing of the same phrase, accomplishes for itself. But if the combination is inharmonious all is confusion, and however precious may be the component parts, the general effect is an impression of vain and foolish excess. Many of these modern Scandinavians who believe that they are in revolt against the naturalism of their seniors, are themselves in their own way naturalists in a worse sense than the older men. They look at the old models just as they accuse their Impressionist fellow countrymen of looking at Nature. They copy what they find and think, as what they find has already got form, that they may leave it just as they find it, and that it is capable of expressing a more majestic symbolic meaning than a picture by Zorn representing a cowhouse. But what they find when used for artistic purposes has just the same value as the manure in which Zorn deals: it is no more national and no more dignified in itself, and it is equally uninteresting. In both cases the interest depends entirely on the treatment, and treatment can transform a cowhouse into a sanctuary which may remind us of Egypt and a thousand other splendid things. The same result may be obtained by the archaistic method; but one misses in most of the conventionalising Scandinavians the relative power which one admires in artists like Zorn. They are playing with the ancestral style.

One artist alone, Edvard Munch, has managed to combine the two methods, and he did it unconsciously. What he had to say did not admit of the application of a traditional form; indeed it may be doubted whether form concerns him at all. He is impelled to conjure up powerful feelings latent in his own consciousness, but in spite of the wildness of his visions there is a material result, and this is because they are his expression of Nature, because he desires to see them again in order to complete himself by them. In his pictures one finds ornament which did not exist in the days of the Vikings, yet in my opinion this modern has more of the old Norse spirit than all the archaistic artists. Sometimes he gives us glimpses of the past just as Ibsen does at certain moments in his plays, when he succeeds in making one quite forget the dramatic combination and in creating a delightful picture as comprehensible as it is improbable. At such moments one almost

believes that Norway lies in a region quite different from the rest of the world, in which things move according to strange yet profound laws, and men have other and more wonderful thoughts than ourselves. One has almost a physical feeling as of the impact of a foreign body, and one's longing to grasp the strange thing more closely impels one to the conquest of a new form of beauty.



A. ZORN. ETCHING.



FIND. VIGNETTE.



L. ZIJL: BRONZE

FROM "BOUW-EN-SIERKUNST"

HOLLAND

If it be asked what country is at present producing the finest art, every one will agree to reply France. If it be asked where the most curious art is being produced, where one experiences the greatest, though in my opinion the most superficial surprises, where it is only necessary to go out into the street in order to see clear signs of a new form of artistic expression quite different from the old, the answer will certainly be Holland. To laymen nothing is so startling as the change which has come over the country of Rembrandt. Israels and his circle were a natural development, and their normality and a natural respect for the sources of this respectable school mitigated the insignificance of its productions, or heightened the pleasure with which they were received.

The young men have nothing in common with them and that is not surprising, for Israels has nothing which could stir the enthusiasm of the young. Van Gogh, the most remarkable painter since the old masters, was the natural reaction against this generation; all the mystery in his methods does not prevent one from recognising him as a Dutchman, yet even this great enthusiast left hardly a trace behind him in his native land.

The change which is visible in the art of the rising generation is so violent that one is tempted to believe that men themselves have changed, that their forms, their senses and their blood have suddenly come under a new influence, unconscious of the old life which was illustrated by the greatest painting of all time. Holland, with all its idiosyncrasies, seems to have been transported in a single night to India or to Java, like the bewitched people in the quaint fairy-tale of Multatuli the Dutch poet.

The original leaders of the movement belonged to the school of Israels. Even Toorop, who was born in Borneo, at first followed the old ways. In fact, he has taken part in almost everything that has been going on in Holland, France and Belgium for the last twenty years. At the end of the eighties he forsook dark painting for Impressionism, and on the appearance of Seurat he became a Neo-Impressionist, though without the profound conviction of the Frenchmen. He adopted pointillisme somewhat after the manner of Henri Martin, but on a smaller scale and in much better taste. The pictures were pleasant to look at and had nothing in them of the aims of Signac and his friends; they retained the early Seurat much as Dubois-Pillet saw him. Toorop found his true vocation in illustrative painting, representing the sagas of Buddhistic culture in soft colours and slender lines. He became the Dutch Burne-Jones, but his more natural transcendentalism, though it made no attempt to secure strength of form, never dispensed with the warmth of a certain honest simplicity, and this protected him against the banality of his English predecessor. Toorop never succeeds at the decisive moment in achieving the concentrated expression of a great temperament; but this want makes itself felt not as a personal shortcoming of the artist, but rather as a peculiarity of his race and of the artistic elements which he uses. In his fancy, in the luxuriance

of his intoxicating images, one feels only a happier, warmer sky than our own; he is always the Oriental who finds it irksome to restrict himself to the limits of a picture and longs to work in gold and jewels rather than in colour. Indeed, Toorop has made lovely things of ivory and the precious metals. His symbolism is not terrifying even when it deals with terrible things; it passes before us like a series of gorgeous dissolving views. One looks at his pictures as one reads certain attractive books, which please us, though at the end we cannot remember the contents. The artist is like some exotic plant unfolding its strange beauty in the botanical garden of a Western capital, not so healthy and natural in its growth as it would be on its native soil, but interesting to the connoisseur because of the very changes wrought upon it by our climate.

Toorop's popularity rather unfairly obscures the incomparably more profound personality of Joan Thorn Prikker. Ten years younger than Toorop, he was born in 1870 and pursued the inevitable course of Dutch training. His début in 1892 with *Choux rouges* was pure Impressionism. In the same year the poems of Verhaeren were the occasion of his conversion to Symbolism, and he produced a *Descent from the Cross* which was exhibited at the Loan Exhibition at Amsterdam. In Prikker all that was best in the old Continental school resisted the exotic invasion. Sensitive as he was to the charms of foreign ornament, he could not keep his thoughts from dwelling on the grandeur of our own primitives; and, unlike many of the moderns, he went to the East, not to find some substitute for the lack of organising faculty characteristic of decadent Europeans, but in order to strengthen his own impulse to synthesis. His destiny wavers between fresco and Indian Batik. Contemplation of the richer and more joyous art of India, whose symbolism is free from the shadow of the Cross, weakened his faith in the ancient ideals, and yet the Christian symbol, the spirit of Christian art, is always prominent in his pictures. He does not use it as an emblem of victory, he paints confused masses of ruins. Shattered saints bear shattered crosses. They are disfigured by martyrdoms more horrible than those of history. Profiles of faces set in a fixed grin of pain appear dimly between headless trunks; priests in splendid vestments kneel between pools of blood. All these things are drawn with a hard pencil on very large-sized paper covered with a faint wash; there is not the slightest tendency to reduce the chaos to order by the use of defined colour or the like. There is no perspective to adjust the planes, the parts of the pictures lie in kaleidoscopic confusion. The psychologist would see in these apocalyptic pictures, the cross-section of the brain of a modern who is open to metaphysical influences. They seem to me to represent the spiritual struggles of a serious artist who lacks the wisdom of Puvis, and who is honest enough to acquiesce in disorder rather than miscarry on a compromise. Modern literature in every country has made us familiar with such phenomena.

Prikker starts from the fragmentary outline of a crucifixion and loses himself in entirely abstract forms.

The technique of Batik was the ostensible occasion of his attempts to resolve the abstraction in his work. While he was occupied with fresco ideas his delight in the precious cloths of the Indies, which play much the same part in Holland as Botticelli's *Primavera* or Fra Angelico's *Coronation of the Virgin* in London, led him to attempt to discover the secrets of this handicraft. Its technique, as everybody knows, is fairly simple. The difficulty lies in the management of the colour, and this he discovered after years of labour. I once possessed a manuscript by

Prikker in which all the receipts for the vegetable compounds used by the Indians in their colouring were noted with prodigious exactitude. His studio at The Hague stank of benzine. There you would find him hovering between an unfinished cartoon and a steaming pot of colour with which he was burning his fingers. All round him hung strips of canvas half covered with wax. It is easy to understand the ambition of an independent artist to achieve by means of our pretentious colour at least what long ago was revealed to a little Javanese girl in her sleep. Prikker did more than this. Out of the intricate web of colour which was characteristic of the old "Batik" work, and which could only be attained by a monstrous expenditure of time, he created a modern decorative method of the greatest importance. He succeeded in keeping the design as simple and expressive as possible and in making the most of the exquisite marbled effects of the stuff, which are produced by the fortuitous cracking of the waxed surface.* These stuffs are among the few productions of our superbly equipped modern industrial art which can be compared with the glories of the antique. Prikker owes some of his inspiration to Colenbrander, the veteran of Dutch decorative art, who in the early nineties was making beautifully coloured pottery at the Rozenburg factory, then for a short time under his direction, and who has since gone in for carpet making, to which he has applied methods equally original.† For all our admiration of Colenbrander a comparison between him and Prikker shows clearly the great advantage which an artist trained in modern methods of colour has over a self-educated man.

After a period of fruitful activity in all departments of applied art, Prikker not long since returned to painting, like so many other artists who were shocked at the commercial character assumed by the movement and its consequences. His principal work is at the house of Dr. Leuring at The Hague, for whom he painted a wall-decoration in fresco, and who, besides several large pictures, possesses a great number of drawings full of colour, nature studies which the artist is fond of making with a soft pencil at Visé in Belgium.

* * * * * * *

The Hague has for generations been the hearth and centre of Dutch art. In Amsterdam it has turned to industry; there is hardly a single painter there. Der Kinderen is a good illustrator, whether in a book or on a wall, who has recourse to exotic methods in order not to paint like Walter Crane. In Amsterdam people work with exoticism as if they had never known anything else. Dijsselhof paints his Indian ornaments with the same zest that inspired the little Dutch masters. There are also still-life pieces, but they are of the strangest sort. At Van Wisselingh's, at Amsterdam, one sometimes sees huge pictures with microscopic details, long fish whose every scale, and the pattern on each individual scale, is closely copied in dark tones with a metallic glitter. To make a somewhat jesting comparison, it is a kind of pointillisme without the colour, the exact opposite of Neo-Impressionism. You must come near, as near as possible, in order to perceive the beauty of this art. The Dutch have a mania for these things. If their authors went to Paris or London they could not command the wages of a day labourer. But it never occurs to the Dutch to leave their own country.

* Uiterwijk, who founded an "Art Nouveau" at The Hague, set up workshops near the town in which for several years Prikker's designs were carried out in Batik under his direction.

† Rozenburg pieces of the Colenbrander period are now only to be found in Dutch collections, for instance, in that of H. W. Mesdag at The Hague. The carpets, with strictly geometrical patterns, are carried out by the Amersfoort Factory.

Dijsselhof lives in the charming environs of Amsterdam, not far from Bussum, where there used to be the famous barn with the Van Goghs. He is a few years younger than the author of the *Mangeurs de Pommes de Terre*. They may have known each other and might have lived under the same roof.

As in England, the happiest results of such experiments are to be found in the domain of books. Nothing can be more original than Dijsselhof's books. * They are as carefully put together as those of the London school and are superior to the latter in so far as they depend less on outworn ornament for their initials and borders.

In Holland, as in most other countries, the first stage in the progress of the rising generation was a masquerade. They felt themselves to be naked and endeavoured to clothe themselves. Motley was all the more popular as it was sharply differentiated from ordinary attire. Indian forms exactly suited this manifestation. It is clear that the exotic phase did not arise casually. It is the most natural thing in the world in countries which possess scattered colonies and have busied themselves about them sufficiently long. For Holland, even more than for England, the colonies are of immediate and decisive importance. The East India Companies were founded nearly three hundred years ago, and out of them grew the English and the Dutch dominions beyond the seas. Holland has possessed the Sunda Islands for an equally long time, and trade with the colonies has become a factor of ever-increasing importance to the motherland. In a comparatively small country it absorbs more and more men and it tempts merchants, artisans, soldiers and civil servants, in fact, all classes of the population, to emigrate. In the colonies marriages take place. It is the male parties to those unions who come from Europe ; the women are natives. The children visit the old continent and form new relations. You can observe the results of the mixture of blood in the streets of Amsterdam. The time is past when the healthy, rosy-cheeked peasant-girl who wears a gorgeous petticoat on Sunday could be looked upon as typical of Holland.

The colonies are eating up the mother country. They not only monopolise money and intelligence and soldiers and the only real interests of the governing classes ; they are also absorbing, right and left, the old traditions of the country. It is a question who loses by it. The impossibility of finding sufficient sources of industry in the old land stimulates emigration. European art showed the same tendency when its natural development seemed to have come to its appointed end and the home soil was exhausted and refused new fruits. Holland, the country whose national obstinacy successfully resisted the invasion of the most powerful European tendencies of the seventeenth century, and declined to accept the Renaissance language which the whole continent was talking, is now ripe for subjection to the culture of the Sunda Islands. What in France in such a case as Gauguin's is regarded as an isolated and a monstrous achievement is here pursued, or at any rate approved, by a whole people. European materialism—the brutal sacrifice of everything that does not whet our appetites, the laziness which contents itself with fiction because there is no time for fact, above all, the hideous want of leisure which is fatal to all culture—all these things conspire to make barbarians of us, and we are on our knees before the Javanese maiden or before any other incarna-

* Books by Dijsselhof and others were published by Scheltema and Holkema, Amsterdam ; Erven F. Bohn, Kleinmann and Co., Haarlem. In the middle of the nineties the latter published the organ of the movement, the " Revue bi-mestrielle pour l'Art Appliqué," edited by Boersma and filled with illustrations by the contributing artists. In 1898 this developed into the brilliant periodical " Bouw en Sierkunst," edited and published by de Bazel and Lauwerike.



DES DA COSTA – AMSTERDAM. Steingut: »David«



DÜSSELDORF.

ENTW
HEIL



MENDES DA COSTA: PIERROT
STONEWARE FIGURE

tion of beauty which is not yet soiled by our sins, and which points the way to a new era.

Holland's dalliance with Java placed her in the front rank of the nations who are preoccupied with new forms. The many-coloured raiment of their colonies taught the Dutch to bethink themselves of the great art of primitive Buddhist times, of which their museums possess brilliant examples Their æsthetics soon hit upon the greatest, the simplest, therefore the least exotic, of these and chose them as models. From these were deduced rational rulesof universal application, which maintained a balance of just proportions in ornament, in furniture, and in architecture. In this way they got back from Java to Europe. Their purified senses took up Gothic again, renounced all superfluous ornamentation, and aimed at the monumental quality of mature utilitarian constructions. Of course this was a very gradual process. Lauweriks attempted rich Empire furniture with Egyptian caryatides ; De Bazel made sideboards, carved formidable sphinxes on the panels, and so forth. But the adjustment of the planes was right, the division of the masses was satisfactory, the work was conscientious. The venerable Cuypers had already given the note in architecture when he insisted on good material and bold surfaces in his monuments, and when he skilfully modified the mediæval element which here too, had to express the national character. Berlage, the builder of the new Bourse, and others who, if possible, laid even more stress on material, were his successors. Like a true Socialist, who shuns every mere luxury as he would the plague, he did his best to secure an even stricter honesty in this particular than the English school had insisted on, and compelled his patrons to sit in drawing-rooms with bare brick walls. His zeal was also directed to more important matters. Zijl the sculptor has to thank Berlage not only for his first commissions, but for the chance of having his sculpture built into architecture. This is a boon the lack of which had painful consequences for Minne, and which would be of the greatest use to Maillol. These sculptures were at first ornaments of an exceedingly barbaric type ; they were even more grotesque than was required by the great distance at which they were intended to be seen, more distorted than the faces on Notre Dame and similar Gothic carving, and they lacked the spectral grandeur which characterises these great works. They produced their impression by imperfect modelling rather than by the conscious exercise of the powers of genius. But in the production of these sculptures Zijl learned surprising things. In the career of this contemporary of ours we can get a good idea of the advantage which the sculptor of the olden time gained by the participation of sculpture in architecture. Some of his bronzes rival Minne's, but he lacks the inward strength and the mature spirituality which we admire in the Rodenbach monument. He is a gayer, more youthful spirit, less self-contained, and therefore an ideal collaborator. The architecture to which Minne's work could be a successful accessory is yet to be invented.

More recently Zijl has been producing some very remarkable statuettes in ivory and other materials, little plastic ornaments representing strange animals, brilliant pieces of conventionalisation in which rich motives are evolved from the few leading lines of the body.

Mendès da Costa was the first in this country to develop a new art for collectors. His works are also statuettes, but unlike most French objets d'art they are not mere reductions of larger works deliberately made, but delightful microcosms thought out in little and extraordinarily expressive. There are Liliputian

peasants grotesquely comic, pregnant women, touchingly serious and reminiscent of Flemish pictures, little apes like the Astartes on the tombs of the courtesans of Mytilene, or heathen goddesses which remind one of Gothic Madonnas. They are all in grès, but of a much finer quality than the viscous mass in which the French shroud their sculpture. The Dutchman's grès does not spoil the form; it merely separates the structure and the colour. They are the best cabinet objects that we have, and are worthy to be set beside the little brown and black figures of Japan. The culture which produces and loves such bibelots as these is not to be despised. It is the same as that which produced the massive silver work or the fine pottery on which Dijsselhof inlaid his black and yellow decoration of animals in the Persian style. It is genuine Dutch culture in spite of the exotic leaven, and it has the peculiar homeliness of the great little painters of Dutch interiors.



DIJSSELHOF. ORNAMENT.



THORN-PRIKKER. ORNAMENT

BELGIUM

In the modern stylistic movement Belgium has already played a thoroughly decisive part, highly personal, because honest enthusiasm and equally honest opposition were alike awakened, extremely useful because, whatever might be said against it, discussions arose out of which some modicum of truth necessarily resulted. Holland's experiment, æsthetically more interesting, was lost upon the other nations if only because of the exclusive temperament of her people. Hundreds of Frenchmen and Germans went to Brussels, for every one who undertook the journey to Amsterdam. Moreover, the essential features of the Dutch movement can hardly be appreciated in other countries. It was only when freed from its exotic wrappings that the result of that movement could produce its full effect, and in the meantime the same result had been more directly reached at Vienna, in a country nearer to our own.

Even in Belgium there were certain essential conditions of the movement which could not be reproduced elsewhere. There was a remarkable amalgamation of old customs and very modern ideas, of the blackest ultramontanism and the most refined industrialism, of the spirit of a bourgeois aristocracy and of revolutionary Socialism. The first modern monumental building which in Denmark was a Town Hall, in Paris a market, in Berlin a bazaar, was at Brussels a Maison du Peuple. In spite of this, it was the bourgeoisie who nourished, just as its peculiarities determined the character of, the movement. From the king, the intelligent manager of the Congo State, down to the clerk, the whole people have the same gift for economics which is the one thing these very different worlds have in common. This is particularly observable in the domestic sentiment of the Belgians. Old custom keeps their cities, in spite of all industrialism, faithful to the principle of the small town, and even when his means are limited, the citizen's impulse is to have a house of his own to live in. This has an important bearing on national æsthetics, and brings architecture more within his reach than is the case with dwellers in great cities. Under this system the architect fares better than in large towns. Instead of a single client, who is not even building for his own needs, but is thinking of the return on his money, and whose only object is to make the building as neutral as possible, and to give it a form acceptable to the average man's want of taste, in Brussels there are ten, each with his individual needs to be satisfied, or at least ready to have such needs suggested to him. The propaganda of the modern school has therefore more chances of a public capable of appreciating it.

The Belgians have yet another peculiarity which makes them extremely important to the critic. Apart from Serrurier-Bovy,* a Liégeois cabinet maker, who took the first steps under English influence, the whole movement was started

* He imported English stuffs and tapestries into Belgium, influenced, no doubt, by the Paris Exhibition of 1889, where there was an exhibition of English industrial art, but he had no further influence on the Brussels artists.

by painters, and, indeed, by people who to the best of their ability followed the evolution of French painting. Their career supplies no final estimate of the value of this training for the new purposes, but it at least offers an important contribution to knowledge. The artists in question were the small Seurat circle at Brussels, of whom I have already spoken, and the beginnings that they made are hardly ten years old. England gave the outward impulse, as she did everywhere, but as in Holland Crane's ornament immediately passed over into the exotic manner of the rising generation, so in Brussels hardly a trace of the foreign influence remains. The example of Amsterdam and The Hague artists who took part in the Expositions des XX may have accelerated this process of absorption. The Dutchmen had some slight start of the Flemings of Brussels, and the latter certainly followed the first efforts of their kinsmen attentively. None the less, the Belgian development was much more independent. There was no eclecticism in it, no Gothic even. It grew visibly from the canvas and had all the marks of a personal and individual destiny working outwards from within.

The character of the easel picture marked the movement decisively from the outset. In Finch, Van de Velde and Lemmen the brush-stroke of the painter became the constructive factor. Finch, although the first to practise purely industrial art, never gave up his etching, and thus kept close to Nature. Neither of the others could resist the tendency to give themselves up entirely to ornament. This natural evolution of ornamental from pictorial art is in a way very remarkable, and it surprised the spectators no less than those who were concerned in it. The phenomenon was quite unusual. As a rule, the conventionaliser, if he was not born like the English artists with the consciousness of a high and solemn mission, was driven by a moral feeling, by some chance incitement or by sheer boredom to exchange his brush for a hard pencil. Often mere inability to achieve style in paint drove a man to try another line. Artists of whom is said that they can draw wonderful likenesses and also execute pretty borders in the modern style are never to be trusted. This is not because it would be impossible to do both things admirably—the old masters can show a thousand examples to the contrary. Nor, again, is it because it is particularly difficult to invent ornament—I believe it to be exceedingly easy. But nowadays the hand that paints worthily from nature in the portrait is incapable of other things. In our time the one department has nothing to do with the other, for each springs from a radically different development, and the union of the two in one artist, which was natural enough of old, is now merely fortuitous. The ancients had no more to invent their ornament than they had to invent the style of the houses which they built; they found methods ready to their hands which, in the course of use and of the modification of the purposes for which they were used, changed imperceptibly. In our time such a relationship, if not entirely fictitious, can only arise from some curiosity of artistic physiology. Doubtless, the development of flat painting which was led by Delacroix, Daumier, Manet and Monet, had in it the possibility of ornament. This was demonstrated in Van Gogh's pictures. His convention was much more natural than, for instance, Gauguin's; his outline grows outward from within, surrounding similar systems of brush-strokes. Gauguin, on the other hand, bases himself on the works of art he found in Tahiti, and consciously uses these and other primitive models, in a much narrower sense than Van Gogh used, say, Millet or the Japanese, to construct a form which he adapts to his needs with tremendous energy, and which he enriches with his inimitable instinct

for the most effective colour. He has never quite managed to make us forget the construction. His school has never completely overcome this lack of physiological elements which only in his own case ceased to be a defect. The numerous failures who allowed themselves to be bewildered by his moral or immoral arguments came to grief owing to the want of flesh and blood in his teaching. Those of his followers who succeeded went to other teachers, to Cézanne, for example, for what was necessary.

The physiological relation is explicit in the ornament of the Belgian school. Seurat had directed their attention to the importance of washes ; they had seen Monet, they were seeing Van Gogh. If the connection is no longer obvious, it was clear enough to those who were taking part in the movement. They found the transition quite natural. What but the consciousness of a natural development based on great predecessors could have justified the first steps of these serious-minded revolutionaries, or could have given them the courage to offer their freely invented form for general use ?

On the other hand, the application of their invention lagged behind. This was the essential difference between them and the English. Morris reached his ideal through literature, and when he recognised what that ideal was, he devoted himself to a search for the means of realising it. Van de Velde had a form, and when he became conscious of what it was he cast about for a suitable content. He was fortified with the Socialism of his countrymen ; he was gifted with a fine instinct of culture which hardly needed the education it had had ; and he became acquainted with the Morris programme at the right moment. He accepted it as his fate, as the artist accepts the plan of a work which he sees before him, with that lightning intuition of its structure which the intelligence is hardly swift enough to express. He found himself at the end of a logical principle of development. Nothing was more logical than to see in himself the beginning of a new one. He began his work equipped with energy above the average, and an intelligence equally distinguished, and he was sustained by an optimism which believed in itself and had the further merit of being able to inculcate its beliefs. In Belgium also the new art at first placed itself at the disposal of the literature which had turned its attention to its Flemish fatherland. Van de Velde himself had found a personal form in literature before attaining a convincing expression of himself in art. His lectures and essays, which appeared in the early nineties, are far from being mere occasional writings. One finds in them the longing to reach a broader conception of the universe through arguments in themselves trifling. The earnestness of the poet which overflows in a torrent of words often conceals the import of his thesis. One feels the obscure creative impulses of a passionate soul striving to express itself powerfully in words. Something of this incomplete striving has passed into the early book illustrations * ; they are

* Covers for the works of the naive poet, Max Elskamp : " Dominical " (1892), " Salutations " (1893), " En Symbole vers l'Apostolat " (1895). All these were published in limited editions by Lacomblez at Brussels. From the same house, in 1895, came Van de Velde's delightful edition of Elskamp's verses, " Six Chansons de Pauvre Homme," which he printed on a hand-press with ornaments by the author. Van de Velde's first successful ornaments appeared in the little edition of his lecture to the Libre Esthétique : " Déblaiement d'Art " (1894, printed by Veuve Monnom at Brussels). Compare also the Flemish periodical " Van Nu en Straks," founded in 1896 by Vermeylen and Van de Velde.

Van de Velde's later work on books deals with binding. Claessens, of Brussels, has executed most of his elaborate bindings, of which the best are in the possession of the Baron van Ertvelde at Brussels. Lemmen has also done a great deal of designing for books, especially some fine type. His finest work was done for an



PAUL GAUGUIN: PEACE AND WAR. (BAS-RELIEFS IN WOOD)
FAYET COLLECTION, BÉZIERS, (HÉRAULT)

unpractised attempts to attain the abstract. I love the clumsiness of these first essays, which are like the awkward movements of young animals. Only talent could show itself so unskilful.

An astonishing revival of abstractions by an intelligence intent on realities gives the complete Van de Velde. Nothing should be accident, all should be due to intellect. His programme was determined when he designed his first wall-paper. It was, and could be, nothing else than the natural consequence of this first development of the artist into the designer. He deprecated the glory of invention which his friends sought to confer upon him and only claimed that he was a normal man. In this he underrated himself, for he is pre-eminently an inventor, and an inventor in the same sense as a great painter who evolves his form from Nature. It is precisely for this reason that his assertion that his creations are those of a healthy man is of no importance. Health is far from being the only impulse to such creation. What is normal in it is its observance of law, but the norm itself is a pure and inviolate abstraction; so strong that it keeps his intellect in subjection, and enables this sagacious man to believe that his furniture is constructed on rational principles. Reason has nothing to do with Van de Velde's furniture; it is the commonest of commonplaces to condemn it as unreasonable. It is made by an artist. Only a fool would deny the intellect of this form, but it is always the intellect of a modern artist, that is, of a man who has suffered much from the development of our art.

Van de Velde recognised the anarchism of the people who were responsible for the modern house. "Good sense," he wrote, "lies buried under a desolate heap of archæological erudition and capricious aberrations. It would be a herculean task to clear away these piles of débris and to track down what has been so long hidden beneath; and, even if it were successful, reason coming to light out of all this corruption would be so senile and decrepit, that it is far better to begin at the beginning and create for ourselves a new reason, which knows nothing, and indeed, wishes to know nothing, of the past."

In practice, however, he cannot do without the elements of his predecessors' work. Even his chairs must have some principle of construction. He colours these elements and transforms them, never capriciously, always strictly in accordance with his programme. He creates a new construction which is derived not from the material but from his abstract principle, from the laws of line which he has discovered in his ornament. You will never catch him in any amateurish blunder; all that he does is well considered. There is not the slightest rift in his system. But his deliberations have no foundation in objective fact. He first imagines his chair and then tries to make it suitable to sit on. But as all superior minds make the problems they have to solve as complicated as possible, Van de Velde imposes on himself the task of avoiding any crude discrepancy between the idea and reality; while, whether he will or no, the tendencies of the metaphysician are more and more repressed by the experience of actual practice. In certain of his works the two worlds coincide; the form harmonises with the intention, as happens when a great painter gets a subject for a portrait which exactly suits his genius. Then we get startling likenesses, possessing all the qualities which in less favourable instances the likeness would have been sacrificed to secure. It is in cases such as these that Van de Velde succeeds in the most real sense in

édition de luxe of "Zarathrustra," which was to have been decorated by Van de Velde, but which remains unpublished.

achieving a construction. Where he fails his form is nevertheless beautiful, because it obeys its own law. We have at any rate the same tolerant affection for it as for the mediocre works of good artists who have done better things. For the idea so prevalent in Germany, that if industrial objects miss the purpose for which they were intended they are necessarily ugly, is a silly superstition.

It is self-evident that the artist's preference for curved lines increases the danger of failure, notably where, as in architecture, the perpendicular is essential or where the material is in obvious conflict with the forms. He was illogical when he declared that his own guiding principle was the old handicraftsman's maxim about the appropriateness of material, and his answer on another occasion to an objector was more characteristic. He declared he had become convinced of the inadequacy of wood as the material of his furniture and that he anticipated the discovery of a more suitable material that could be moulded. The preference for moulded forms of an artist who by origin was an Impressionist requires no explanation. This is the reason why Van de Velde's happiest inventions were in the domain of the metal-worker.

Van de Velde is separated from Morris by his fearless modernism. Morris depended on a Utopian insistence on handiwork. His hatred for industrialism confined his practical idealism from the outset to narrow paths. The Socialism of Van de Velde was more logical in its demands. He conquered the superstition that machinery was unwholesome, and showed that it was men who were to blame for not understanding how to use the means at their command. Morris' renunciation compelled him to restrict himself to the most extreme simplicity. If his practice was not to flout his principles he could not exact from human hands the slavish toil incident to wealth of detail. His compensation for this poverty was delight in a familiar form, the suggestion of the national style which warmed the heart although it did not comfort the body. Van de Velde, who will have nothing to do with Gothic, has the more personal note of the two, and is the better endowed as an artist. He moderates the severity of the discipline and takes from the age in order to give to it. Both he and Morris are symbols, not models for workers. Van de Velde recognised the legitimacy of machinery, but made no use of it ; his furniture is anything but machine-made. Yet he makes the reasonable suggestion that we must work with machinery. Morris, on the other hand, the real Morris, the artist, is not belittled by the narrowness of his teaching. Behind his work, too, there was a complete man, and it was no archaism, it was hardly even an old-fashioned sentiment, which impelled him to impress on the world something of his conviction that we must work with our hands.

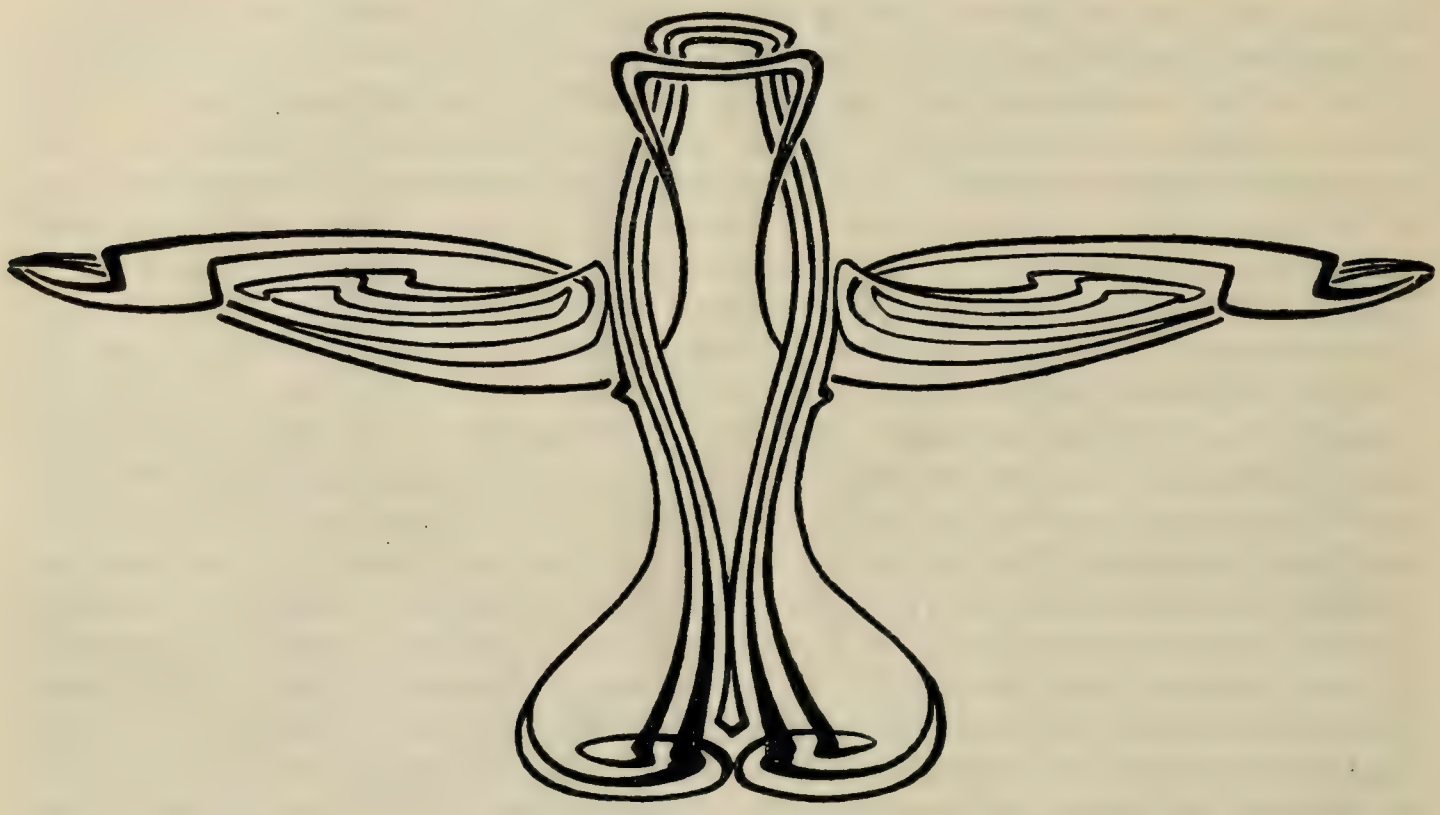
The decoration of flat surfaces was naturally Van de Velde's favourite field. His creative impulses necessarily found themselves more or less under constraint in all other departments of handicraft owing to primary and unalterable conditions. Here he was free to pursue his abstractions with no apparent external restrictions, and to express his personality in the purest imaginable form. Everything that contained a symbol for the modern eye could be turned to account in the working out of ornament. The many-sidedness of the field of observation compelled a neutralisation of the first element taken from Nature. He required a form entirely pliable, undisturbed by anything objective, a new language of convention in which at least a hint of the new spirit could be conveyed. Scheffler sees something baroque in this form. He is right in so far as this lurks in all degenerescent

Impressionism; but it is merely an accidental characteristic, not the moving spirit of the work, which has absolutely nothing to do with the past, and, as far as the will of the artist is concerned, is not intended to have anything to do with it. It is more natural to think of the world of form which modern machinery has opened to us. Van de Velde is not unconscious of this relationship. His motives have something in common with the elasticity of a motor-car, and recall such things as levers, pistons, and sections of machinery. The beauty he creates has manifestly laid its account with the dynamometer; it harmonises with the awakening instinct which finds its æsthetics even in the Machinery Hall. The fallacy is obvious, for in the process of transcription the best part of the world that is to be symbolised is undoubtedly lost. The machine is beautiful so long as it goes. It possesses force in action which accomplishes miracles and yet is based on absolute probability; the sense of purpose in it has the strongest possible effect on the imagination and the manifestation of that purpose satisfies with a kind of mathematical certainty. But it is essential that the eye should see how the purpose is accomplished. If the machine stops, the eye of the layman can take no pleasure in it; it then appears to be what it is, a dead thing, mere old iron, and only the memory of the spectator who saw it in motion or the mind of the engineer who can easily imagine its action, is capable of enjoying some pale reflection of its real nature. Now Van de Velde is always running the risk of making things immovable, which have no meaning unless they are in motion. He can preserve the practical element; nothing prevents him from bringing out the interrelations of the parts much more clearly in the picture than is often the case in the concealed mechanism of the machine; but he can never preserve the machine's purpose. The apparatus which in the machinery hall is used for pushing, hammering, or dragging great weights by means of a material provided with all the necessary power of resistance, and a nice calculation of gravities is here analysed into its details; that is to say, an attempt is made to show its beauty from a totally different point of view. The beauty of a piece of machinery does not depend on the multitude of its details, but on the fact that as soon as it begins to move, every detail vanishes in a mighty torrent of unity—a phenomenon which in principle closely resembles that of a work of art. For a work of art, too, can only be said to be produced when all details, noses, ears, clothes, trees, everything which forms the material of the picture is brought together like the screws in the machine into a mighty movement which we call the unity of the whole.

Van de Velde seeks to obtain movement by applying his system, not to pictures, but to continuous ornament. In this way the sense of motion is to some extent attained by the recurrent intersection of the parts. But this motion lacks collective effect—the most essential element of beauty. It perhaps produces the suggestion of physical running; but the nearer it comes to that goal the further it departs from the level on which lies the pleasure we take in art —a pleasure which is anything but physical.

We are nearing the end of the story and are coming to the questions which were considered in the introduction. The cry "Away with pictures!" is rising, though it is partly drowned by the triumphal music of French art. The menace is strongest among the young men who accept the ideal of the division of labour and of enjoyment. It is being sternly pressed in countries far from the rays of the setting sun of thrice blessed Paris, which are striving after a warmth of

their own. They waited as long as the grandiose spectacle lasted in Paris. The nations, as it were, held their breath and gazed as the procession of genius unrolled itself. But now, even before the end is quite come, they have risen like impatient spectators in a theatre who cannot wait till the curtain falls, and through the applause, the words come in a barbaric hiss: "Away with pictures!"



VAN DE VELDE. ORNAMENT.

ORNAMENT

Enough ornament has been designed in the last ten years to suffice this old world of ours for all the centuries it may yet survive. In addition to the Neo-Gothic, Neo-Japanese, Neo-Assyrian, and so forth, a new style has arisen at Brussels which has been christened the Belgian style. These groups fall into hundreds of subdivisions. Since the last epoch in the history of style there has indeed been a manifest and complete change in the part played by ornament in art. Formerly it was more of the nature of handwriting, in which no doubt the idiosyncrasy of individuals gave rise to unconscious peculiarities, but so far from being a field for the display of individuality, it was, on the contrary, the symbol of some sort of community. It was a concomitant of style as idiom is of human speech. It was one of the many means of artistic expression of the period, by no means the most important for the definition of style, merely one subordinate member among others. Morris was quite untroubled if people reproached him with archaism and want of independence because his motives were not entirely the product of his own wits, but were taken from the capital he had inherited from the past. It was enough for him if, when he had modified and transformed them, they answered his purposes, covered the surfaces before him as he thought best, and brought out the charm of the colour in the way he wished. His successors have tried to make what with him was a means into a fundamental principle; it is the eternal error which decides the course of all modern art. Beginners in industrial art whose hair was still of the length which tradition ascribes to genius, aimed above all things at an original handwriting even though they had nothing to write. Houses and furniture were painted as pictures had been painted in earlier days. The easel became a signboard. As we saw, the whole of our new industrial art starts from the illustration of books, and even now often takes the form of an ornamental border. Even artists of real power hide their art in work of this kind; it is a throw-back to the old art of detail, "style-architecture," as Muthesius calls it in his excellent work.*

Among the many moderns at Brussels who practise architecture, there are a few who deserve the name of architect. The greatest of these is Horta, who has an instinct for his art to which there is no existing parallel, and a brilliant gift of invention precisely suited to the problems of the present day. He knows how to get double the accommodation out of a house on the old Belgian plan by skilful arrangements of the rooms, and has the true master builder's capacity for making space obedient to his purpose. He can make you go up three steps without noticing it, because he has a happy knack of choosing the position of his landings and the view you get from them. A refined appreciation of hygiene lays on air, light, and water, just how and where the man who thinks only of his comfort

* "Stilarchitektur und Baukunst." The changes of architecture in the nineteenth century and its present standpoint (K. Schummelpfeng, Mühlheim-Ruhr, 1902).

has imagined it in his dreams. But, much as he has done for the Belgian dwelling house, his talent is only half displayed when he works on a small scale. He should never design furniture, but should keep all his strength for large construction. Fortunately, he has now at last obtained a wider field for his abilities and has been entrusted with one of the most important commissions in Germany, which will give scope to the further developments of the powers of the bold constructor in iron and stone and glass whose first achievement was the Brussels Maison du Peuple. Yet this brilliant artist prides himself above all on his ornament, which wriggles like a coloured thread from hall to weather-cock, and still pursues the spectator in his dreams. This would be unimportant, but for the consequences. We can forgive it in a Horta in whom we feel the accumulation of a joyous energy, of a power which transcends the scale of a private dwelling-house, for if we removed his ornament we should only improve the building. It is otherwise with his successors, who have nothing left when you suppress their accessories. The confusion of their lines embraces a whole world, the highest ideal of this cheap renaissance: universal artistry.

As soon as the conception of a universal æsthetic culture came into being the artists set themselves to construct the elements of this harmony out of their own heads. It would have been a very fine conception, if only the obstinate thoroughness, the ripe education, and the means of Morris had been behind it. Failing these, it was the worst form of dilettantism. People plastered a house, a box, a piece of clay, a piece of gold or silver, with reductions or enlargements of the same motive, and became at one fell swoop, architects, decorators, potters, goldsmiths, in a word, universal artists.

Nowadays people are probing themselves to the quick in search of traditions which are recruited from the remotest parts of the world, or answer to some kind of national consciousness of which no one but an artist can make anything. People have no time, no room, and no ready money, and are clothed up to the nose in a thousand warm things which seem more needful than the most edifying reforms of style. They have found interests of all kinds which are naturally more important to them than the ideas of the great lords of the Cinquecento at Florence and Rome, and the management of these interests has changed the face of the world more in one or two centuries than in the ten times greater span of time between Praxiteles and Michelangelo.

But then, even at a time when much was possible that is unthinkable to-day, people were attacking the problem in a more sensible way by beginning at the beginning. They did not design hangings before they had houses; they were not quite so ready as the present generation of artists to fancy that they had created a world when they had designed a chair. They had not yet discovered those blessed words, "Industrial Art," and, if we except the worthy Vasari, there was as yet nothing in the way of artistic advertisement. The passion was in the work, not in the words of the artist. It is the passion of our contemporaries that I suspect most. We are accustomed from of old to see it displayed in things from which the public is excluded. It always flourished among painters and poets who scorned the world around them. But is industrial art to adopt the same attitude?

On the Continent this artistic passion translates itself unmistakably into the curving lines of modern flat decoration. Ornament was the weapon with which people thought they could conquer Morris. Morris stuck to the old

idea that it was not worth a great man's while to pursue the fame of inventing trifles of this kind. Nowadays, Mr. So-and-so, of somewhere or other, takes pencil and paper and blossoms out into the "original inventor," parades the twirls of his peacocks' tails like a clerk displaying his Sunday tie, and is prouder than any Morris. But of the taste, the dignity and the decency of the Master there is nothing left. Antique form for Morris was less a model to be copied than a school for the mind. It was to him what the teaching of Latin in schools is for general education, a discipline which produces great indirect advantages precisely because it has no direct practical application. Under Morris' régime one had to be an educated man in order to be an artist. So much was said about the dangers of this preservative that its advantages are now completely forgotten. The ornamentist of the present generation by no means always derives from the sources of Van de Velde, but sometimes from the faded ideals of the decorative painter. The State should place the right to bedaub the face of the world under restraints at least as strict as those which govern the trade in poisons. Formerly, when people like this produced bad sculpture and bad pictures they did no harm, for the State and the various organisations concerned in such matters locked up their works in dim museums and galleries where they disturbed nobody's peace of mind. Now one cannot walk a step in the street without being held up by some horror in line or colour.

Modern interior decoration is a protest of the individualistic consciousness against the encroachments of the levelling spirit which accompanies the progress of the world. An attempt has been made to represent it as an emanation of the spirit of contemporary life. But it is much more in the nature of a revulsion, an attempt at self-protection on the part of the artist, who sees with alarm that there is less and less room for him in this world, and who therefore works against his age with every means he can find, even with those supplied to him by the age itself. Artists claimed that art should have its proper place in modern life, more because they were pursuing an unconscious policy of self-preservation than because they hoped that they were making an important contribution to a more profound theory of that life. Or perhaps they deceived themselves about the importance of their symbolic trappings. It was only when the activities of the symbolists learned self-sacrifice from the sterility of the material with which they had to work, and when they began to be uncomfortable about the genuineness of the shibboleths which in the heat of propaganda they had been wont to accept, that it became gradually possible to take the rationalist programme seriously.

The modern private house is an extraordinary example of the hypnotic powers of art. The artist persuades Mr. X to have his measure taken for a house as he would for a pair of trousers, and thereupon provides him with a dwelling which is the latest product of his (the artist's) artistic evolution; and Mr. X, after a week or two, feels quite at home. Of course, it is himself that the artist instals. I have no space for the inquiry how far it is possible to give a living expression to the personality of Mr. X, through the furniture of the artist Y. To ensure such a result the personalities both of patron and artist must be markedly objective. But the artist's relation to his client when the latter has ideas of his own must always be unpleasant, as unpleasant as that of the painter to the picture buyer, who requires him to make his clouds a trifle greener. Advanced artists decline commissions on these terms and thus express only their own personalities. Horta will not accept a single suggestion; other architects go so far as to prescribe

what costume shall be worn in their rooms. Pictures and bookbindings are predetermined in the contract. Jews are sometimes ordered to get themselves baptized, and one of the first clients of a star of the new movement was forced to cut off his beard!

Meanwhile, the question is being timidly raised whether this brutality is really necessary to put the culture of the householder in the right light. That comfortable contempt which one begins to feel in the very vestibule of a house in which one can calculate the owner's artistic views from every pot or pan is easy enough to produce. Far finer is the effect of an impersonal apartment which is smooth and inoffensive like a well-cut coat, and which attains its full form and colour only when the master of the house comes into it. I do not deny that it is possible to make a work of art out of a middle-class room, still less do I deny that any one is at liberty to try. But I do protest against the type of art which does not get beyond the antechamber. There is a want of the taste which connects the landing and the ante-room, or even the vestibule and the street. Taste also is necessary in the inhabitants. It is obvious, even now, that the splendour of the Appartamento Borgia did not sin against the contemporary taste. Where there is to be splendour, it is above all necessary that it should suit ordinary mortals, as the Borgia rooms suited the ordinary mortals of that period. One feels much more at home there than one does even in the best of the rooms decorated by the Scottish school. It is precisely in the best of them that the effect is so strong, that one is forced to regulate one's attitudes, gestures, one's very words, in a very definite and wholly unnatural way, just as the star of the modern movement above referred to demanded. And this is merely theatrical.

Taste is what we need in our houses, not art. Only uncultivated people want art. Art, as we understand it, can never come from our artists in furniture. They must recognise that no chair or piano, however instinct with genius, can replace a good picture, that it would be brazen audacity to mention their handiwork in the same breath with such art as three strokes of Manet's brush could create.



TH. HEINE. DRAWING. LOIE FULLER.



MARCUS BEHMER. DRAWING.

THE NEW VIENNA

When, at the end of the eighties, Young Berlin began to bestir itself, it gave rise to a good deal of literature, and this was hardly surprising, for the leaders of the movement were all men of letters. The movement retained its literary character. But only its chief pre-occupation, the reflex action on the social system, is to be traced in the contemporary poetry of Berlin; the new tendency showed no desire for form, for as yet it was unconscious of form. Indeed, its literature was essentially hostile to formalism of every kind. Realism translated such art as it could see into psychology; what it could not so translate was judged not to be art. Its exponents strove after extreme objectivity in this psychology. It was Impressionism, more pictorial than the contemporary activities of Berlin painters. The early Gerhart Hauptmann is an Impressionist whose gradations are like Monet's.

Vienna took a different line. Here literature already had a coat of many colours when the "Freie Bühne" was fighting its first battles in Berlin and men were throwing off their raiment in order to have their arms free. Bahr's programme was more and yet less than a literary programme, aiming at less and more than Hauptmann and his friends. We have only to compare Anzengruber's dialect with that of the "Weavers" to realise the difference between the groups. They never got so far as the principle of "l'art pour l'art" at Vienna, but after all what inkling of it had Hauptmann's school, or, indeed, have we such a thing as a school at all? The older generation of Vienna had no literature under which Quod erat demonstrandum was not written, and Bahr, who wrote his "Gute Schule" at Paris, grew as a journalist into this Austrian tradition. The method suffers from its summary character, which excludes subjects that might be left vague and imposes a limitation on itself. But others transcend it, often not by genius, but by caution, and occasionally by sheer intellectual dishonesty. It is easier to find the weak spots in a finished picture than in a sketch.

Bahr undertook to create a new Vienna. The success that followed was not wholly due to his work; he had hardly realised the scope of his task when he was at work on it. His share of the achievement is more marked because it can be traced in his writings, but he was, in fact, one of the leaders. And his method fairly represents that of the others even of the older generation. In Berlin people clawed each other and thus progressed; it was the right way to evolve personalities where there was no common aim and where each could only lose by approximation to his fellows. At Vienna they helped each other and this was the only way, not merely because there were no great personalities who would have been the better for being alone, but also because at Vienna there were many forces which were compelled to work together. There was much real enthusiasm, a capacity for guarding against compromise and a willingness to work with the means which were available. The elder men showed a kindness to the young which at Berlin would have been received with insults; the young men showed a good breeding which would have

been derided as insipid at Berlin. Women influenced all this art, good and bad alike ; even revolutionaries could and did rejoice in the beauty of the Empress. In Austria, as in the Latin countries, the worship of women is an integral part of the national culture.

Artistic revolutions nowadays happen with the rapidity of our means of transport and are therefore generally superficial. The ancients travelled more slowly but enjoyed the advantage that their reformations, though laborious, were exhaustive. Ours are like hotel linen washed in a hurry, in which the old stains reappear after a time. The Viennese Secession against all expectation was genuine. It seems to me only yesterday that there appeared "Ver Sacrum," a joint and much decorated production of the new group of artists which dates, as a matter of fact, only from about six years ago. Hermann Bahr and Max Burckhard figured as literary assessors. Old Rudolf Alt, the honorary president, contributed one of his imperishable drawings of the Stephansplatz. For the rest the first number was rather worse than the first numbers of magazines usually are. There was nothing startling, no good picture, hardly a decent study. But there was one thing—style. Better still, there was a diminutive of style, a style in little, that accomplished hitherto unheard-of tricks, and provided a delightful accompaniment to the mediæval letterpress. Pedants said it could not last, others advised that judgment should be suspended and rejoiced in the courage of men who knew how to help themselves. Bahr clearly expressed the essential character of the Secession. It was no part of the programme to set up a new art beside the old. "We are neither for nor against tradition," he wrote, "for we have none. There is no conflict between the old art, of which we have none, and a new art. There is no question of a development, or a change in art, but merely of art." Bahr advised the rising generation to agitate and not to fear ridicule. He did not say for or against what the agitation was to be. They were to agitate, to attract attention, it mattered not by what means.

The young people took a short way. There was nothing to be made of the native domestic art of Vienna. A few mouldy ruins of the Makart epoch still survived, which were no good to any one. The elements which Feuerbach had to overcome in his day had dwindled to grotesque phantoms. So they wrote off the past and began again from the beginning. It was one of the most startling episodes in the history of European art, and it has hardly a parallel even in America. For American architects who have to build thirty-storey houses find a kind of form prescribed by the very technical difficulties inherent in the task. The public is familiarised with these things by force of necessity, and never thinks of approving or condemning the innovation as a style. There was no past in America but a tremendous present which clamoured for creative activity. Every one knows how this advantage has been used in the United States, and how it has been wasted; how every large town is divided into two parts, the business part which is modern, that is, American, and the residential quarter, which is a medley of European styles often grotesquely misunderstood; and how artists like Lafarge, Tiffany and a few others also make bibelots over there, and are impelled to study emotional English pictures and Oriental glass to this end.

At Vienna there was no serviceable past, and it was the conviction of the younger men that there was a present which was longing for a new art. The Emperor in his palace, the nobles in parliament, and the citizen in the café felt not the slightest trace of this aspiration. The artists invented it and agitation did the rest. Here,

too, people began with a fiction, with a kind of symbolism. The means used were quite unique. There was no rediscovery of a national form, no renaissance of popular art, no individual strokes of genius. The result was attained very much in the manner of the chemist who makes a mixture for some definite purpose, taking some of this and some of that and shaking them together. No question of race decided the elements of the mixture. For the Dutch their colonies were a justification. At Vienna they were Greek, Celtic, Egyptian and Japanese in the course of a single morning. It was easy for them to see that a highly developed art like the French was incapable of getting out of its own groove. They were aware of the notorious untrustworthiness of the amateur who allows himself on every possible occasion to be led by the nose by a few dealers, and of the hideous blunders of the scholars whose only mission seemed to be the correction of the errors of other people while committing just as many themselves. All these significant concomitants of our modern art lessened their respect for organised æsthetics and heightened their reckless valour. Whatever pleases is right. These completely natural people, untroubled by the crazy gospel of an abstract art which one may love but must not touch on pain of being taken for a pickpocket; simple souls, accustomed to forms that required no veils; enthusiasts, to whom art meant all that they and their fathers had found it so hard to do without, grasped the cup and drank. Public patronage of art could never have had a greater task than here; never would a museum have been of greater service; no professor of art has ever let slip a better opportunity of usefulness. The State did nothing. The Emperor's only contribution to the movement was to refuse the title of professor to the eminent painter, Klimt. So the young men had to do everything for themselves, and, in view of the natural incompetence of the State in such matters, one cannot now be sure whether its assistance might not have been a mere embarrassment. They took what seemed useful from every country, and brought it to their exhibitions, which, apart from the intrinsic value of the exhibits, have at least had a definite influence on the art of organising such shows.

Their achievement was as brand new as a pretty necktie in a smart shop in the Graben and cheap at the price. It fulfilled only the negative conditions of style by making no attempt to sound the depths and stir the deepest spiritual problems. Its aim was rather to disseminate itself, and in a month or two it was everywhere. English influence had very little to do with it. Walter Crane's subdued ornament was too dry for the Viennese. They had not allowed themselves to be cuffed about all these years in order to plant a modest flower in some quiet corner. They did not want their ornament to express anything but to make people feel. Everything for which other nations had for years had an elaborate system of symbolic expression came to birth here in confused form and found utterance in the first pictures, the first designs for houses, the first tables and chairs made by Klimt, Olbrich, Moser and their friends. There was no domain in which they did not try their hands from the first, to the best of their ability.

They had a tremendous success. The public railed like madmen and flew to the Secession at all hours of the day. This gave the society courage to make a house for itself, the very original premises built by Olbrich in the Getreidemarkt, with the charming pierced gold dome and Moser's frescoes of Egyptian women. Here, in the course of educating the Vienna public, several lessons were learned. It will never be forgotten how the Secession brought George Minne to Vienna, how they gave a show of the Scottish School, how Meunier and Rodin

were put in their true light, and how Klinger's Beethoven was set up, how also, theirs was the first attempt to group the art of the Impressionists historically, or how they anticipated even German patriots in exhibiting our beloved Marées. All this was done quite easily and simply, and cost not a tenth of the sum voted to art by many a small and impoverished State. It has done more good than the expenditure of all the Viennese museums put together. Some result serviceable to synthesis remained from each of these exhibitions which showed people what was going on in the world and what was lacking on the Danube. The Scots made the deepest impression. Van de Velde was respected, but was too heavy for this atmosphere. The thin lines of the Scots, on the other hand, their nervous, exiguous ornament, and their delicate colour, had the effect of a revelation. Every young movement worships the phenomena of decadence at first. The Mackintoshes aroused almost more enthusiasm than Beardsley, whose certainty perhaps was thought to display too much virtuosity ; the gentle Khnopff had been the first to charm the Viennese with exotic fancies ; Toorop spread the passion. Minne invigorated them, and so did the Kalewala pictures of the Finns. The Swiss Hodler found a second home at Vienna and was good enough to share with his Viennese friends his discoveries in parallelism which enabled one to see far beyond Puvis de Chavannes, and other little people whose ideas were not so advanced.

The question was whether Vienna would absorb too little or too much. Klimt's great enthusiasm struggled vainly for a technique capable of immortalising all the yearning for utterance. The enthusiasm of the friends who surrounded him hardly deceived him as to the gulf which lies between intention and performance. In this case the new aim which the others were trying to realise and which, of course, remained at the stage of a pious wish could not fill the gaps in his own development, could not replace the creative instinct which is never an intellectual product. The others had furniture, wall-papers and glass to make. The more pictures they absorbed, the better it was for their ambition to give all possible richness to these things. Klimt's experiments, if he remains a painter, must always do him harm. The ambition to try to deal with the many stimuli to which he was exposed by devoting his own energies to the symbolism of his stimulators drives him to abstract constructions. These are outside the domain of æsthetic effect, not because their subjects are pregnant women and other things distasteful to the Viennese, but because he fails to bring them into any formal unity. As in many of D'Annunzio's novels, all manner of things are introduced which are relevant only to the instinct of the author as a connoisseur and not as an artist, and which, in fact, are mere padding. But while the Italian uses these weaknesses as a sort of personal adornment, Klimt flies to this makeshift of art as to a refuge, and by honest work tries to make a sort of architecture out of them. This is just as impossible as if a builder tried to begin his rooms from the roof.

When the Viennese wrote off the past and decided to begin again at the beginning they, of course, found themselves at the stage of nations beginning their artist career a thousand years ago and more. But they had an advantage over these, in the possibility of accelerating their development by intellect, and thus making as much progress in a year as other people achieved in a century. The only thing that was indispensable was that they should really begin at the beginning and should, like a nation, at first restrict themselves to what was necessary. Fresco, which was the goal of Klimt, has never been the vehicle for complicated thought. It was

always a folk-song, solemn and earnest, a simplified expression of the thought of the age clothed in contemporary garments. Its meaning was plain to the meanest intelligence and the lover of the Muses bowed before its beauty. Why should not this be so to-day ? In the whole Viennese movement, literary as well as artistic, there is not a single artist who is content or able to follow art for art's sake. Even their best lyric poet is an unfrocked moralist who nevertheless gives us splendid things. Why then should the one man capable of grasping a means of art whose immemorial tradition is the telling of beautiful stories, use that means in vain strivings after the impossible, in order to produce l'art pour l'art ?

When Klinger's *Beethoven* was exhibited at the Secession, Klimt's mosaics adorned the walls. When afterwards the Impressionists made their entry, the mosaics were respectfully covered up. It was strange to think of this decoration being there behind the Vermeers, the Velazquez, the Goyas, Monets, Cézannes, Van Goghs, and all the other giants of the past who were the lords of all the treasures of painting, yet only accomplished what was required for their age. Yet in these mosaics, separated from the pictures by the thinnest veil, there is the work of a courageous modern as passionate in the pursuit of beauty as any of them. Would that this fortuitous proximity had been symbolic of a community between the two, and that the immortals could inspire the misguided art of the modern with a breath of its living force !

The many-sided activities of the movement were not restricted to the exhibition building. They invaded the streets, the houses, and the workshops ; they took possession of the manufacturers and the craftsmen and brought new life into the sleepy town by the Danube which according to popular report was already being outstripped by the capital of Hungary. In 1900, when Austria appeared at the Paris Exhibition, she was already the only country acknowledged to possess a modern style. At the same time one could not conceal from oneself that this courageous energy had its seamy side. This young Vienna was like a lad who has grown too quickly, tremendously tall but shockingly thin, weak of bone and precociously diseased. The great danger was that the enthusiasm might exhaust itself in fancies to be manufactured wholesale in Vienna factories. There was a swarm of forms of every conceivable sort, every day contributed something new. This eclecticism ran wild, trying its stomach with things which were hard to digest. The fiasco of the Darmstadt exhibition in the summer of 1901 was the catastrophe. Olbrich, the chief contributor, seemed the very type of the new Vienna. He produced interiors and built houses as modern painters sketch a portrait—at a single sitting. Ideas came to him as flies to sugar. And they were capital ideas ; no artist is more inventive ; his fancy is never at a loss. But Liebermann's celebrated saying that fancy is a makeshift is approximately true of architecture. Olbrich's success was so great that his projects never had time to cool ; they reeked of wash and paper even when they became bricks and mortar. This made him popular ; the little Olbrichs multiplied like the illegitimate children of foreign potentates. The decorative carnage of the Turin Exhibition of 1902, the work of an Italian, who resides in Constantinople and takes in German technical journals, was an offshoot of his, and it must have been a curious experience for Olbrich, who sent some excellent things to this exhibition, to find in his host a caricature of himself.

After all this, one naturally had the gloomiest anticipations of what Vienna itself would come to. These, however, were not fulfilled. When the well-meaning Grand Duke of Hesse summoned Olbrich to his dominions he took away from

Vienna its greatest talent but not by any means the spirit of the movement. That remained at home in the work. The great object of which Hermann Bahr had spoken in his programme, "a time of rest in which agitators are no longer required," came sooner than was expected. Art stepped in at the very moment at which the artists were becoming artisans. The audacity of their form gradually disappeared; the ornaments slipped from the outside to the inside of the cupboard and gradually disappeared altogether; limbs became stronger, proportions simpler, and the whole material correspondingly richer. Furniture had formerly been made in order to be exhibited; people now took to making it in order to use it. Here, as in all other countries, most of the artists had at one time been, or had believed themselves to be, painters, and there were one or two architects among them. They had been pupils of old Wagner, the only master builder in Vienna, who had for years been fighting for a rational form; they took care that the groundwork should be solid, and imparted to the painters the rules of architecture, getting in return a feeling for colour. Progress resulted from this mutual support. No individual, however important, could in detail have attained the quiet success of the whole. It was like the old times in which no man who was working together with his neighbour sought any advantage over him. The celebrated Socialism about which so many modern artists talk so big became in this case a thing of course. This communion triumphed over all differences of race and class, and even profited by them. The friendship of Hoffmann and Moser is typical of this. Hoffmann the squat, sturdy, incurably healthy child of Nature from Moravia, sensible almost to insensibility, is the architect. The decorator is the slim Moser, a true Viennese, amiable, deficient in sharp contrasts, all suppleness and grace. It may be seen from both what two fundamentally different temperaments united in one enterprise can achieve.

From an exaggerated complexity of form the Viennese have gone over to the extremest simplicity. Loos, architect and author, artist and thinker, pushed the principle so far as to exclude all but mathematically straight lines. It was inevitable that in the course of these wanderings they should at last get on the track of a norm and learn to render it naturally. After this it was only necessary to use whatever came first in order to be right.

All this sounds extremely simple, but Vienna was the first to achieve it. Perhaps this is not so much a credit to Vienna as a discredit to the rest of the world. The others had a bewildering variety of ideas and made such a confusion that one is quite astonished to find in Vienna things which cannot be turned to any purpose save that for which they are intended. This is characteristic of the modesty and the wholesome knowledge of human nature which distinguishes these people. Their ideas are reflected in their intercourse with their pupils. Roller forces personality on his scholars, so to say, not by talking nonsense to them about the personal consciousness, but by leading them naturally on to self-help, compelling them from the beginning to aim at their goal by personal methods. By means of well thought out changes in the materials with which his pupils have to work he draws out their talents, notes himself what this or that one lacks, or for what he is distinguished, and brings about the realisation of their individualities. Lecoq de Boisbaudran has found an unexpected successor here. No text-book can replace this simple method, and it is therefore to be hoped that Roller, who at present is devoting himself entirely to the theatre, his favourite province, and is renewing

the decorations of the Vienna Opera, will not give up teaching altogether. Behrens has summoned some pupils of his to the industrial school at Düsseldorf.

It only remains to describe the Viennese style itself, though its superiority lies in the fact that there is nothing to say about it. Hoffmann makes his houses comfortable and decent, gives them outlines suited to the neighbourhood and takes care to secure wide views of the fine surrounding country, and as much interior comfort as he can. His chairs are made to sit on. Moser designs coverings for them which are quite as suitable for us as English brocades. When once the Viennese have a standard as unforgettable as the decency which the normal man acquires by education, there is nothing to prevent them from profiting by the happy difference between the taste of Vienna and that of Berlin, and from clothing themselves with such simplicity and naturalness that the old Viennese elegance will reappear. When the Viennese artists lost the love of beauty it did not die but took refuge among the women. In spite of all revolutionary assertions that everything had to be begun all over again, good taste never disappeared in the old imperial city, and this excellent tradition has been the greatest advantage enjoyed by New Vienna.



J. HOFFMANN. SKETCH FROM VER SACRUM, 1898.



TH. HEINE. DRAWING

THE GENERATION OF 1890

If we were to look for the sources of a rational decorative art in the present day, we might very well find these in the German Runge. He evolved a system from Romanticism, and was the first German who recognised the physiological conditions of modern painting. Strong and sincere, incomparably freer than the Frenchmen of his day, he was pre-eminently fitted to inaugurate our series of great solitaries. He disappeared as did Mareés and Feuerbach, dying at the age of thirty-three. Lichtwark discovered him some few years back. All our great artists have aimed at creating an art whch should reach the hearts of the people. They lacked nothing for this end—but the people—and their useless efforts to evoke some echo of their passionate utterances broke their voices, often after a cry of anguish which had nothing articulate for their contemporaries. In France, measured speech was all-sufficient. There was no necessity to scream, and the artist remained in harmony with himself and his neighbour. Art production was preserved naturally and the many-sidedness of the continuous creativeness even now obscures the question of purpose. The tree has so many new boughs, that no one thinks of the roots. And yet even here it seems doubtful whether the great period of history has not come to an end, whether men like Manet could ever arise under the new order of things, whether the delicacy of the younger artists is not an indication of the end. The art-history of Germany, on the other hand, is a chain of accidents. All attempts to form a school failed, owing to the lack of definite aims; they depended entirely on personal suggestion, and fell to pieces when personalities disappeared. Tendencies arose in a purely arbitrary fashion. "During the first ten years of my stay in Rome," writes Feuerbach, "a painter was not expected to paint; the spirit, the spirit was the watchword! We had no time to learn how to paint a head or a hand. As is always the case, a reaction speedily set in after these idiotic proceedings, and artists plunged head over heels into the decorative paint-pot." The manner of the reaction was desperately unreal. The new generation sought moral, not æsthetic antitheses to the older art, and this morality once more resulted in isolation or triviality, in new symbols, which no one understood or which every one could have expounded without the help of the pictures, garnishings designed to hide the lack of essentials. What Feuerbach wrote about his Roman period, applied with equal force to the New Romanticism of twenty years later. "The ridiculous cult of accessories in these days is merely the necessary counterpoise to the ignorance of human body and soul. When ideas are lacking, the skilful introduction of some pot or pan works wonders." This was a hit at Makart, a more harmless manufacturer of properties than our present-day Symbolists, and therefore easier to refute. Our generation of 1870 was quite destitute of this passion for accessories. The painting of Leibl's circle was the last artistic attempt to create a German art, and found scant favour in the new Empire. All the traces it left were a few pictures which disappeared among certain quiet people. It is difficult

to realise now that there was any painting at all in the first decade of the newly founded state. When some few years ago certain incontestable evidences thereof came to light, it was as if we were unearthing precious antiquities.

It was not possible to create a representative art in the new Empire by means of the palette alone. The public began to take an interest in Liebermann's and Uhde's pictures, when they discovered Socialistic tendencies in them. The much later literature of Hauptmann and his friends gave the key. The opposition to Zola formulated by Arno Holz was accepted, not as an attempt to refine upon his technique, but as an intensification of his plainness, subserving not the nature of the work of art, but reality, preferably of an ugly kind, with greater zeal than the art of the Frenchman. Many amateurs of the period took all the pains imaginable to persuade themselves that a cowshed is more beautiful than a Greek temple. Most of them detested the whole business in their hearts.

The first sign of a new era was the rapprochement between painters and poets. The instinct which drew them together did not at first rise above certain apparently heterogeneous qualities, and was originally by no means the outcome of liberal æsthetics. Those very poets who easily recognised hidden values in literary work and allowed free play and every instinct here, if it made for art, were impervious to discreet beauties in the work of their painting brethren, and drew their inspiration readily from coarser, and in some cases, hardly formed works. As under certain circumstances the picture resolved itself into a melodious lyric, they concluded that the optical result must also be harmonious.

It seems incredible, and is a more significant evidence of the tendencies of our race than all the theories, that no definite and catholic system of æsthetics should have been formulated in Berlin at this period with momentous results. That essence of the Schlaf-Holz-Hauptmann period which lends itself to formulation contained an admirably pure æsthetic programme. These men themselves gave utterance to it indeed. As conceived by Joh. Schlaf, it applies to every art, and not to literature alone. What, in short, did it amount to, save the creation of rhythm with the physiological means of art, renunciation of the accidental stimulus of arbitrary episodes, creation of the work out of the material itself, not out of the extraneous sentimentality of the spectator? Treatment was recognised as the power which causes phenomena to reach the soul. Hauptmann replaced the dramatic phrase by a broad handling of the surface which embraced all detail, however multifarious, and moved the masses naturally. *The Weavers* was a strongly woven texture, the rich colours of which threw Sudermann's reflections into the shade. Dostojewski, Ibsen, and finally Strindberg had an influence among us comparable to that of Turner on Monet's circle. The painter's atmosphere became "mood," which led to catastrophe more inevitably than the subjective emotion of the earlier artists. What was called reality was organism, and the much-decried Naturalists did not forget in the presence of Nature to bring all that with them, which made the pictures of the Impressionists something very different to casts from Nature.

Richard Wagner's Naturalism had similar aims, or at least we seem to recognise in the Bayreuth master's music that Rembrandtesque veiling of masses which has become dear to the moderns. But even he showed the limitations of the German genius, as soon as he attempted to fix the boundaries of his art.

The æsthetic system common to Wagner and many other Germans is defective less because of insufficient gifts in its own domain than by its depreciation of the

other arts. This defect, the sign manual of the German, is the necessary consequence of the isolation of individual artists and individual arts. Concentrated upon himself, the vision of the hermit leads his interpretative powers to a universality which, subjectively considered, may be the embodiment of order, but objectively regarded, does not escape disorder.

The new culture of the Empire began by taking this condition of things more or less seriously into account. Every improvement brought about an aggravation of individual evils to begin with. The rapprochement between art and literature made painting all the more pictorial at first. But advance was so rapid, the two came so near each other, that the writer really looked into the problems of pictorial art, and the laws of the sister arts revealed themselves to the painter.

The first external effort to organise these relations was made at the end of 1894 at Berlin, some few years earlier the scene of the " Freie Bühne " (" Free Stage "), but the folks who baptized the new child had practically nothing to do with the old Otto Brahm circle, and it was a mere accident that the thing was planned in Berlin, though it was indeed only possible in Berlin. Here it naturally became a confederation. The name " Pan," suggested by the unfortunate Dagny Przybyszewska was to indicate both a careless joyousness in the spirit of the Greek God, and the manifold arts to which its members were to devote themselves: a periodical, well-printed books, industrial art, a Berlin Salon and other fine things. The enthusiasm of the band was great. The aged Böcklin who came to Berlin at the psychological moment, gave prestige to the movement, the Thiergartenstrasse found the preliminary funds; the provinces, hearing something of modern art for the first time, provided associates. Princes of the German federation figured among these. As, however, opinions upon modern art differed even among those most closely associated, disputes arose after the first two or three issues of the periodical, which consequently became the exclusive undertaking of the society, and was transformed from a medium of agitation for lofty ends, into an aristocratic organ of dilettanti without any well-defined dilettantism. It served, nevertheless, for a rapprochement of the arts. The poems of the younger writers were enframed in the arabesques of the painters of Young Germany. Eckmann, Heine, Von Hofmann, Leistikow, Sattler, Strathmann and many others here placed the first of their drawings that showed decorative aspiration at the service of literature. " Pan " failed to exercise a decisive influence in art life, owing to lack of publicity. The expensive nature of their enterprise showed the restricted field with which these young people reckoned from the first. They judged rightly that a purely artistic programme would interest scarce a thousand people in Germany. But they judged wrongly if they imagined that it would have a fertilising effect upon art.

In Germany we have as yet no sharply defined art, much less a system of æsthetics. We have an intermediate domain. Journalism has absorbed all that was wont to lie concealed in voluminous correspondence, in memoirs, in occasional literature. The journals which the thinker used to write only for himself or for posterity, now become newspaper articles, for no writer can feel assured in a world which lives so rapidly that there will be time to read him after his death. Many a one comes to literature who in former days would have remained a reader; many a one remains a writer, who would once have become a poet.

All countries have masters of this kind of raw material. I may name one of our own: Maximilian Harden. The work Harden has carried on in Germany within the last twelve years is antipathetic to most people. Few people like to see

humanity put through a filter, so to speak. It has been made a reproach to Harden, that he belongs to no political or artistic party ; those who feel this to be a defect fail to understand him. He would be a bad kind of filter if he were different. The " Zukunft " was founded in the interval between the " Freie Bühne " and " Pan." Harden had, or retained, no part in either of the latter. No artist in " Pan " would have dreamt of attributing any influence in the lofty sphere of the Muses to this politician. We are always inclined to look upon the Muses somewhat as elderly ladies and to forget that they must go with us through thick and thin, even if they are privileged to hold somewhat aloof from us on the march.

Harden combines the features of the new race, not altogether an artist, for he is a politician, and no mere politician, for he is an artist too. In his intermediate domain he is more intensive than most artists of his generation in their higher sphere. His art is directed solely to keen observation and to an incisive reproduction of what he sees, stripped of all that obscures the typical, yet furnished with all the inimitable naturalness of actuality.

The difference between Harden and the ordinary journalist is, that we do not need to know Harden's heroes, or to take part for or against them. We can read his articles twice over, as politician and as artist, and the second time it is even an advantage that the first time they were no use to us. Harden has not been very warmly welcomed either by artists or politicians. This is unfortunate for him, but it enhances his value to us. It is for this reason that his blows have such crushing effect.

High art, on the other hand, behaved at first in the most dilettante fashion in the new generation. It tried to make the new time-monster digestible by pre-Christian receipts. Symbolism grew to colossal dimensions, that the new tendencies might be contained in the old vessels. Adam and Eve appeared in forms more and more grotesque, and the serpent became the cherished domestic pet of the guild. In literature, the consecrated language of our fathers broke down at every turn. Writers took refuge in stammering dialogue, in blanks and dashes. But here the irresistible musical genius of the race soon evolved a new form from these deformities. In art, the inspiration was more dangerous. It threatened to imperil possessions that were hardly assured, and to reduce the artistic development which had maintained itself painfully through all the adverse forces of the age, to anarchy.

It was not Berlin, the centre of the new state, which was to direct the artistic movement. It could not offer the same field to art as to the literature of the generation of 1890, for it possessed no combatants of the same standing. It was not the political and economical centre, but the central point of Germany's art, the home of what was relatively the strongest artistic activity of the land, which naturally became the medium. This inevitable dualism—Berlin-Munich—gave characteristic features to the movement. The division of the movement and its consequences between two different places, the capitals of the two most important countries of the new State, the centres of two absolutely opposite stocks and cultures with a different outlook, different habits, and populations at least unsympathetic, seems the strangest anomaly. Yet it is probably a great blessing. For the Berlin influence was too mighty to be shaken off entirely by the Munich men ; it was too obviously a part of the great modern tendency we recognise, if not at home, at any rate in all other countries. But the dualism had one inestimable advantage ; it prevented the triumphant materialism of Berlin from penetrating directly into the

artist's studio. And finally a sturdy flower grew up out of the personal hostility between North and South.

Nevertheless, Munich had certainly no modern elements at her disposal. Her plein-airisme was perfectly unserviceable. It treated of patches of sunlight and sought in vain to produce Nature as purely as possible as an artistic means. Here Lenbach certainly gave more than his exemplars had given. Among his successors, sympathy might have been looked for from Habermann and similar artists. Marées, the only one who might have given some decisive aid, died at the critical moment, just when Stuck began. On the other hand, Munich still possesses the workshop, in which the remarkable renaissance had been botched up after the war. Lenbach and this renaissance—intrinsically one and the same thing—became the generators of the new idea.

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The first stirrings of the new art at Munich date from about the same time as the appearance of the new literature at Berlin; but in the nature of things it needed a few more years to reach its manifestation, which came in the shape of the Secession. The energy displayed on this occasion was more good-natured, the protest less acrimonious than that of the North German poets. Stuck struck the characteristic note of the native artist—it was industrial art.

Stuck is the most important product of the carnival renaissance of Munich. He underwent a process hitherto unheard of in any country. Everywhere else artists had abandoned the easel for industry; Stuck's evolution followed the inverse course. Like Thoma, he is of the following of Müller, but he took things more humorously than his older compatriot. Thoma represents the old-fashioned, sentimental, good-hearted Germany, Stuck the Neo-Greek, light-hearted Germany. The former is edifying, the latter amusing. The most amusing thing in both seems to have been their public. One of them was held to be a pretty wit in his youth, and even now seems not to have forgotten how to amuse himself hugely at the expense of the public. He began with comical emblems and curly ornaments for bills of fare, adding a little of everything, modern colours and new sunlight, Lucifer and the deadly sins, the familiar serpent and the guardian of Paradise with the flaming sword. The mermaids which formerly decorated the borders swelled out into Böcklin bodies with Munich countenances. He made sphinxes into barmaids and barmaids into sphinxes. Lenbach taught him the art of portraiture—how to express everything in a single glance of the sitter—and Stuck translated into a plastic form that understanding of the decorative value ancient art which was the other side of his master's genius.

Strange to say these extravagances left practically no trace on the final Munich movement which they preceded. This Stuck took as seriously as did the public. The beginnings of the new industrial art were earnest, almost sombre. Its first products were picture-frames and some of the symbolism of the pictures entered into the furniture. The forms affected followed every style but the English. English furniture had been taken up in Germany by the wholesale manufacturer and its patterns had been multiplied and debased in every provincial town by the time our artists began to occupy themselves with industry. For them English art was too smooth; it offered no foothold for their symbols. They made, as it were, purely human furniture. The abstract ornament of Brussels could not satisfy them. The appeal to Nature which had been made by so many voices seemed here at last to be bearing fruit. The chair legs recalled real limbs and were

united by articulations to the seat. Cunning cushions were piled on voluptuous sofas, threatening lamps hung from the ceilings; majestic ash-trays reposed on the monumental tables.

All that was beautiful in these ugly things was their naïveté, the honesty of the artist in applying his method to the material on which he was working, the work itself which required honest effort from the worker, his courage in following out his idiosyncrasy to its logical conclusions. No doubt the form was awkward, barbarous, anything you like; but it *was* form, or rather the promise of a form. The school displayed the rudeness and want of proportion natural in young men who do not know how to manage their limbs, enthusiasts, who wanted to put a whole palace into a chair; it was superabundance, not poverty. Even yet the works of the Munich artists clearly show that they do not recognise the utility of any object as the supreme law of its construction. But does not this recognition come soon enough? Our artistic power is so much awakened that every manifestation of youth gives us hope, even though we break our shins over it now and then. We need not fear that our age will not discover how to make sensible tables and chairs. That is a task which requires not art but only a wholesome knowledge of the world and a certain amount of taste. The Viennese are nowadays making normal furniture, and in ten years' time, perhaps this will be so everywhere, as soon as the creative instinct which is being spent on this department of production has appeased itself. Then the desire for other things will become the more eager, and it will be the turn of the people whose souls have not gone entirely into their sofas. The recalcitrants, who opposed the movement most strongly, will then perhaps appear as saviours. It is not for nothing that France struggles so obstinately against her engineers, but for the same reason that Vienna acclaims them. In the latter, the new element is important, in the former relatively negligible.

Besides, the Munich folks have the architecture of older contemporaries before their eyes, which does not urge them to extreme reduction, and they would not be the children of this prosperous town, if they were concerned solely with cold reason. The North, the other centre, takes care of this part of the programme. When wholesale industry begins to interfere energetically in the business, the purpose will soon be clear enough to the people.

The painter Krüger, in the "Vereinigten Werkstätten," organised the better part of the abilities of the Munich school. Similar societies have been founded in other places; and more recently Riemerschmid, Pankok, B. Paul, Obrist, Endell, and many others, have found plastic solutions for many interesting problems in domestic architecture.*

This movement was far from absorbing all the strength of the young men of Munich. Indeed, it only became known to the public gradually in the exhibitions. Their work was at first regarded as a fashion, a reflection of English and Belgian decoration, not the manifestation of a new generation. The Dresden International Exhibition of 1897 was hardly enough to enlighten the North German public about the nature of the Munich movement; but shortly before that they had hit on the right way to attract attention. In 1895–1896 two new journals appeared at Munich "Die Jugend," founded by Georg Hirth, who had already taken a prominent part in the foundation of the Secession, and "Simplizissimus,"

* Compare "Dekorative Kunst" (Bruckmann), "Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration" (A. Koch, Darmstadt), two journals founded in 1897, and other similar periodicals.



THOMAS THEODORE HEINE: TEMPTATION

founded by Langen who had been educated in Paris. They were weekly papers, anything but conservative in tone, and intended for popular consumption. Unlike "Pan" they had no artistic programme and no didactic aim; neither had they any abstract ideal to defend. They initiated an attack, but against whom or what was not clear in the first numbers of "Simplizissimus." In the introductory poem, Philistines and hypocrites are dealt with. There were ardent modern lyrics in prose and verse; Georg Herwegh, the hero of '48 was dug out, to be the standard-bearer of freedom. The intention was plain, the manner perverse. On the first page was written, "The worst fools are the good fools"; but this was not the note of the first pictures. The artists of "Fliegende Blätter" revealed themselves here more freely and characteristically on their own lines without finding the new path. The mixture was new. Munich jests alternated with French and Scandinavian drawings. The boulevard contributed its softest graces in Steinlen, who threatened to make absurdity sentimental; the danger was that instead of being bitter they would become bitter-sweet, and share the popularity of "Die Jugend." A German, Thomas Theodor Heine, averted this mischance and carried out the original programme with unexpected pungency. He gave the right colour to the paper and inspired his whole circle with the courage to seek out new ways, finding for himself an original means of achieving a highly original kind of artistic result.

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Heine was to all appearance born for the situation. His earlier youth was spent in the studio of Jansen, the historical painter at Düsseldorf. This meant drawing from the cast until you were black in the face. His relaxations from this pursuit were the making of drawings into which he put all his heart. He spent half a year on a head of Hermes, found one day that he had had enough of it, tore his drawing across and left for Munich. Here the academic fashion of dark painting was in full bloom. Even Düsseldorf was better than this, so he went back repentant. His master mended the drawing of Hermes, gave it back to him and invited him to finish it. Heine remained nearly six years at this work, the formulæ of which, dry as they seemed at the time, obviously laid a great foundation, and were very useful to his subsequent draughtsmanship.

Of course, he wanted to be a painter. Until 1890 the department of art in which, as experience shows, German artists are least proficient, was almost the only one which was not considered beneath their dignity. Heine justified his choice better than most of his comrades. In his studio in the Theresienstrasse at Munich there are landscapes and interiors done by him in 1886, which are no worse than many pictures in the New Pinakothek, fluently painted things in fluid colour. When he came to Munich, in 1889, pleinairisme had just been discovered. Heine took part in the movement and probably would have remained all his life one of the multitude, but one day his father suspended payment and the young man was forced to hasten his career. In order to earn money he took to illustration.

In the landscapes of the first Munich period there is already manifest the composer who seeks in Nature not merely a motive, but actual contributions to the pictures that have risen before his mind's eye. The picture, *Before Sunrise*, painted in 1890, when it was exhibited at the Munich Kunstverein, already displays the typical and familiar method of Heine. We have a steep winding street full of workmen on their way to the factory in the background, and beside it a deep valley. The tones of the picture are cold green and brown, there is a sinister tint

of red in the sky. This sky was a literary sky, and the person in the foreground, the seductive woman at the sharp parting of the ways, belonged also to literature ; neither is convincing. But these superficial and superfluous things, just because of their superficiality and superfluity, are easily removed. The kernel of the picture points to the beginning of a new architecture made up of line and colour, not of thoughts.

The picture with the Hauptmann title is knocked together with touching audacity. The sharp angle of the stone causeway in the foreground, and the two curves which enframe the factory above are well invented. In spite of the uncertainty of the two lines of the valley, one seizes the artist's intention and rejoices in the boldness of his construction. In a later drawing he again took up the same architectonic motive. Here the road again divides, leading on the left to a factory and on the right to a prison ; at the parting stands a policeman talking to a workman.* In the interval between the two pictures the artist had found his purpose.

Heine's qualities as a painter would never have made him a great artist. The rôle of the "Simplizissimus" draughtsman in painting is not fully explained by the analogy of Harden's position in literature. But if we set aside the personal results which Heine, the younger man, is already able to derive from his "Simplizissimus" work, the comparison is fairly just. They are similar temperaments ; they belong to the same race. Heine has the advantage of a more lyrical talent ; the nature of his art admits of a richer form of humour. But without the volumes of "Die Zukunft" and the development of German journalism which they represent, "Simplizissimus" could hardly have existed. It was not only that Harden's readers furnished a public for it ; the artists themselves took their cue from journalism. The sense of the inscriptions of the Munich prints is contained in many of Harden's monologues. In the drawings the power of his concentrated satire becomes mightier still, for in them all attempts at conclusions is abandoned. They give instantaneous pictures whose meaning every one understands and grasps more profoundly than if they had been accompanied by explanations. The law of Impressionism was here exemplified with renewed force.

Heine remains the subtlest satirist of the Munich school. His is an intellect which does not always find that drawing suffices to express all it has to say. Many of his plates do not reach their full effect without the lines at the bottom of the picture, but these lines are always touched with a wit that seems to give salt to the picture. The reader has a twofold enjoyment. On the death of Bismarck Heine drew an Iron Chancellor being conducted by a shining angel to the heavenly sphere ; in his face is reflected the joy he feels at "the approaching meeting with his august and blessed Master." Heine makes the angel say, "Impossible, your Highness, his Imperial Majesty is in the department for great men, your Highness is in the understrappers' section." The words alter the whole scene ; the cheerful pale blue sky flecked with clouds, the delicate lilac of the flowers, seem to change colour ; the angel, almost as spiritual as a Burne-Jones creation, becomes a pert miss well versed in tables of precedence. Even in the best of the early plates the effect is heightened by the words : a good instance is the visit of the newly married couple in cycling costume to the rustic grandparents of the husband. Grandmamma, who has fainted at the sight of her strangely-attired grand-daughter-in-law, is being recalled to life by her sobbing relatives with the aid of a watering-

* "Simplizissimus," iii. (1898–99), No. 27, The Solution of the Social Problem : "You have absolute freedom, my good man, you may go to the right or to the left, just as you like."

pot. Here Heine throws the title into the form of a letter from the fair bicyclist to a friend, and, as it were, secures two effects at once.

Heine never takes a side ; he conventionalises his people, not in order to magnify their eccentricities, but in order to put them at the distance at which the effect is strongest. When he does not change them into animals, he places them in the dear old days of Biedermeyer and clothes them in the garments which are so suitable to their sentimentality, and which, better than words, symbolise the contrast between these people and their thoughts, or the real feelings and the moral pretensions of the Philistine. By this means Heine develops his ornament, and in so doing he approaches Beardsley. There is as yet no question of any influence ; for in 1890 when Heine painted *Before Sunrise*, Beardsley was only eighteen and as yet undiscovered. The " Morte Darthur " appeared in 1893 and 1894, and Pennell's notice in the first number of the " Studio " with plates, was published in April of the former year. Heine's first book decoration—the cover for Stephan George's " Blätter für die Kunst "—was produced in 1893 ; the cover-design for the " Demi-Vierges " belongs to the end of 1894. It was not till later that Beardsley's influence began to tell.

Beardsley and Heine are allied natures marked by great differences. Their resemblance becomes obvious if one compares Heine with the other artists of his circle ; it is less conspicuous if one compares him closely with the English artist. At the first glance the latter seems to have the best of it ; the total absence of the journalistic spirit from his art seems to give him the advantage. He had no actualities to work out ; he was a pure artist who thought only of himself and who spent his life in perfecting his wit. Heine has absolutely none of his Gallic vein. The work Beardsley did for the press was negligible ; the art of his interiors could appeal only to a small circle of men of letters and connoisseurs. If the German, whose contributions to his penny paper have become the raw material of Socialistic politics, was to have any effect on his public at all he could not dream of attempting Beardsley's achievements. Heine's satire is coarse compared with the wit of his English contemporary who worked for the audience for which Oscar Wilde wrote : while Heine's public was composed of the bourgeois of the opposition, who only began to buy " Simplizissimus " when it ceased to be sold at railway stations, But the wit of Beardsley was perhaps even more terrible than that of Heine. Heine, like Harden and Nietzsche, is an instinctive optimist, who makes use of the formulæ of pessimism. Beardsley's wit was always directed against itself, it was the flower of a fantastic pessimism which was always entrenching itself within narrower limits. Lysistrata's patron shut himself up in his melancholy and made it almost joyous. He needed his mise en scène in order to die beautifully, and his sufferings and early death lay the world under an eternal obligation. But though his end came too soon for those who loved him and his work, he left nothing unfinished which it was in him to complete.

Anything may still be expected of Heine. It is often thought that he is merely playing with his treasures, practising for some much greater undertaking. He is a person of a much coarser fibre than the quiet youth who died at Mentone ; but in spite of all the other's charm he is greater, because stronger and healthier and better armed for the battle of life. Beardsley's one source of enjoyment was his own beauty ; he loved and admired the long thin hand that made his drawings. Heine knows no such joys as these. Art for him is but a means to an end. We are often astonished at the primitive character of the detail, and he himself often makes

merry at the expense of his "scratches." But, indeed, detail is little to him; he takes his inspiration where he finds it, whether it be baroque furniture or rustic signboard, a Burne-Jones angel or a drawing by Jossot, and in his hands these never become still-life. His intellect seizes hold of them, changes them and creates out of them a great new fact, in scorn of God and all the world. What holds true of Daumier's caricatures cannot be said of Heine's work. There is absolutely nothing of classical culture behind it; nothing of the line which Beardsley took from Greek vases, nothing grandiose, nothing elegant. It is something poorer and newer, something of to-day or to-morrow, patched together, unclean in detail, but fundamentally genuine. Herein lies the greatest difference between him and Beardsley. Heine is anything but a decorator of books. No doubt in his drawings for "Pan," "Die Insel," &c., there is much charm; indeed, the finest book-illustration yet made in Germany has been done by him. But compared with his other work they are but the fringes of an art which aims at greater things, the art from which the fragile Beardsley was debarred, the art which covers great surfaces.

Heine's pictures in the Secession exhibitions of recent years have not much interested the German public. It is always difficult for the comedian to appear in a serious rôle. In his pictures Heine attempts the same seriousness and the same absurdity as in his "Simplizissimus" drawings on a large scale. Of course, he avoids the sharp discords which in a work of small format become themselves a means towards artistic effect. But he could not change his nature, simply because he had canvas and not paper before him, and even a limited dose of the gall with which his gentlest imaginings are usually mixed seems to clash with the effect which is generally expected of a wall decoration. Without going into the interesting question of the proper limits of the use of irony in art, it is clear that a picture which presents nothing but the mental attitude of its author disturbs the peace of mind of the lover of art, and, like any other kind of sentimentality, arouses painful feelings which disturb his æsthetic enjoyment. The question here, as always, is simply what else does the artist give us; how is it done? Then comes the discovery that a sentimentality whose end is serious is measured by different standards from that which is suspected of being comic. Segantini may be as sentimental as he likes; he carries us along with him, and the German public will pardon Thoma anything because of his geniality. Personally, I find the heterogeneous character of Thoma's or Böcklin's pictures much more disturbing than Heine's irony. The evil of the former is that it does not spring from the intention of the artist, while Heine's irony is too obviously significant to disquiet me. Heine appeals to a more wholesome view of art than that of the emotional school. His humour draws a salutary line between his æsthetics and theirs. His rejection of their ideas leaves him all the freer in his quest of form. If we find a line in Heine comic which in Toorop produces an effect of deepest mysticism, the fault or the merit of this is perhaps not justly to be ascribed to the artist. It is possible that a future race will enjoy both without finding them either comic or mystical, and then it may be said of Heine that he was the more fortunate of the two. When Art cheers us she has fulfilled no small part of her heavenly mission.

The other "Simplizissimus" artists who come within the purview of this study have one advantage over Heine, who was so much richer than they: they got closer to Nature. For them, the paper of "Simplizissimus" was a substitute for canvas, and it gave them manual dexterity, which they would not have acquired so readily

with the brush. The external purpose of caricature has much less to do with their personalities than with that of Heine, on whom the law keeps a particularly watchful eye, not without reason. They are less mordant as satirists, less witty, but there are stronger temperaments among them, or they give their temperaments freer play.

Rudolf Wilke and Bruno Paul are painters before they evolve a sarcasm, and even before they draw. They have but one form, whereas Heine produces a new one every day, but this form is peculiarly their own, it is like their handwriting. It arises from the natural desire to give the characteristic elements as strongly as possible with the primitive material. Their experiments are therefore more restricted and more logical. There is no question of Heine's influence. All they have in common is their common work on the revolutionary periodical; that which they oppose to the bourgeois, is remote from all political actuality. It is merely what Liebermann showed before them and what was coined in France before Liebermann; a natural art, aiming at the utmost simplicity and honesty. There are very few among the pictures that have fetched high prices in Germany which can stand beside these drawings; their authors have had the advantage of working quietly; they have been spared the ordeal of seeing themselves acclaimed as masters of their art while still disciples, a fate that threatens to overtake Slevogt. On the other hand, it behoves the historian to protest against the absurdity of denying them their rightful place in modern art, because they remain faithful to paper and pencil. In these days, when so many painters produce pictures which would look just as well in wood-mosaic or any other material, we must not refuse to reverence these workers in a more modest medium who understand their paper much better than Slevogt and others understand their canvases. There are, of course, defects in the best publications. Nowhere is there greater danger of mannerism than here, where the necessary haste of production tempts the artist to repeat details that have once served him well, and the necessity of bringing the type before the public often results in commonplaces. All the more honourable is the high level generally attained by Wilke, Paul, Steigerwaldt, and Gulbransson, and the respectable average of Thöny, Münzer, and others.

Paris and Japan contribute to the result, of course. Lautrec, Forain and Vallotton have given an inspiration here and there, but no more. The thing that produces such an unpleasant effect in Slevogt, is the monstrous superficiality of his stroke, whether he is thinking of Trübner, of Manet, or even of Delacroix. The greater his exemplars, the poorer are his results, for the simple reason that he does not follow the current of thought, the organisation of these men—he could have no better models—but takes some snippets from them which he imagines to be technique. The point of view of Slevogt and his kind implies the victory of the idea that art produces the animation of the material, when it is operative at all, in other words, the victory of Courbet over Böcklin. But the victory should have not only symbolical, but practical results, to be of any value. The "Simplizissimus" people seem to me to demonstrate this value better. They have recognised the purpose of the simplification practised by the Frenchmen, the enhancement of expression, and continuing on this road, they have achieved results which they owe, not to their exemplars, but to their own practised hands. It is solely by this command of a form, evolved with the utmost economy, that they achieve their phenomenal effects of Nature, and attain a pictorial beauty that triumphs over caricature. However grotesque the part may be, the part

they play in the whole transforms them. Just as Van Gogh got wonderful beauty from light in his *Mangeurs de Pommes de Terre*, so the Munich artists succeed with their peasants. It is not for nothing that the great Dutchman comes into my mind in this connection, and it is of good omen for the Munich men that they can evoke him. For what they have in common with him they have evolved from themselves. There are many drawings by Bruno Paul which suggest the comparison. The drawing reproduced at the end of this chapter appeared in the second year of "Simplizissimus" (1897) at a time when Van Gogh was entirely unknown in Germany. The dancing peasants in the background recall certain of Gauguin's forms, and he too was unknown to Paul.

The attractive element in Paul and Wilke is their pictorial quality. They are painters and colourists no less than draughtsmen. Here, again, the limitations of their technique, the necessity of restricting themselves to essentials, have stood them in good stead. The richness of effect they get with three or four colours, a skilful use of overprint, dots, squares &c., is amazing. Wilke is the most distinguished of the two, the Whistler of this little noisy world. Paul prefers the bold surface, which he cloisonnés with fresh tones, but Wilke attempts more discreet charms. His drawing, made up of very fine strokes, is sometimes more powerful in its effect than Paul's ; sometimes he suppresses the stroke altogether, and models entirely with gradations, from white and black through all the tones of gray. Such things have a dazzling pictorial beauty and, without a touch of colour, they seem richer than strongly coloured plates.

It is naturally the draughtsmanship of the circle which is the most prominent feature. Its physiology is determined to some extent by the elements with which the artists have to deal. The creation of an individual form common to the whole group was brought about by the reproduction of the remarkable types, which adorn the renderings of life in German cities. It was natural that these peculiarities, which seem specialities to every stranger in Germany, should become valuable to the artists of the new generation. The lieutenant and the corps student, for instance, are perhaps the last purely vegetative products of the town. The city, as such, destroys art, because it suppresses all forms ; the inhabitants of great cities become neutral entities, like our great, well-arranged stores and railway stations ; they provide no gesture for art. Gesture belongs to the being who can neither read nor write, to the peasant. The generation of 1830 went to the woods, Van Gogh to the country, Gauguin to Tahiti. Our Germans find the exotic in the streets, and the material is better prepared than that of the peasants and savages, because in those last uniformed figures of the age, class-consciousness has become typical gesture. Wilke and Paul seem hostile to the lieutenant and the student ; in reality they are fond of them, just as Van Gogh loved his potato-eaters and Gauguin his savages. This love does not move them to make pictures of saints with their types, after the fashion of the brethren at Pouldû, but in the end, the goal they set before them is the same : the monumental.

* * * * * * *

Heine's narrower circle before the foundation of "Simplizissimus" consisted of Corinth, Schlittgen, Eckmann, Strathmann and Behrens ; an older man went with them, Trübner. Slevogt attached himself to them. This band of artists carried the movement to North Germany. It is not without significance that the majority of the artists who restored the waning prestige of Munich for a time were North Germans. They left their home in order to learn, and came back when

they felt themselves sufficiently equipped for their task. They had to go back because the field offered them in Munich was too narrow for that task. It is no argument against this to say that "Simplizissimus" was founded at Munich. This purely North German production is only conceivable as a periodical for and about North Germany. It may be that Strathmann's adherence to his native swamps is the only thing that retards the creative manifestation we have been expecting from his great talent from the very beginning of the movement. If he had followed his friends, Eckmann and Behrens, he would probably long since have found worthy tasks such as those which fell to Melchior Lechter. Eckmann was the first disciple in the North of that much-discussed "applied art," in which the application is more apparent than the art. "Modifying art" would be a juster description; yet it had its uses, for there was a reason for it. It clarified the confused theory of colour that obtained in the nineties. The Germans were so much in love with Böcklin, that they took his blue as a symbol. They talked of colour-idealism and similar absurdities, forgetting that colour, per se, is a house painter's material, and that any colourman can supply a bluer blue than Böcklin's. Eckmann's wall-papers drew the attention of the public to effects of contrast and the value of tones, even though they were not always models of distinction. The modifying factor employed by Eckmann and his quickly won adherents, was Japan.

Japan has worked positive havoc among us. An art that lives by a breath, and has learnt, as the climax of a long development, to walk without legs, exquisite within its limits, but inadequate as compared with its predecessors and its great European rivals, could only exercise a favourable influence upon a perfected art like that of France. It became our guiding star in Germany when we were beginning to learn to walk. The result was an aggravation of the confusion. Makart's times came back again. Where Makart and his school had daubed on colour, lines were applied, but all that lay beneath was left untouched. This purely superficial ornament was nowhere so general as among us, a race of profound thinkers. The Belgian influence superseded the Japanese, without diminishing the evil in any way. It was epigonism of the worse kind, favourable to the manufacturers, who, by simply changing the ornament, were able to follow all the phases of modern art.

Happily, the architects began to bestir themselves. The sumptuous official buildings of the early nineties were useless to domestic architecture, though Wallot's influence must be gratefully acknowledged. The architecture of utilitarian buildings, on the other hand, says more for the possibility of a German metropolis. The works of Bruno Schmitz, Messel and Möhring were symptomatic expressions of Berlin's individual character, in its natural growth, not its artistic development. Berlin pure and simple, the city of bank directors and engineers, would not be amiss. The distressing aspect of Berlin is its mixture of crusader and bank director. The spirit of opposition which Berlin manifests and must manifest, is only valuable as impulsion; were it otherwise, we might accept the paradox, that the present Emperor has done more for art than all his predecessors, because he has opposed it so strenuously that the most implacable political opponents in the Reichstag have clasped hands over the question. But if such impulsions never achieve a quiet solution, all they bring about is chatter on both sides, a policy of words and emotions, behind which the object of the dispute sinks into the shade. Thus in Germany all we produce are symptoms, a crusader's

castle side by side with a modern house, and generally there are two or three symptoms of the Middle Ages to every one of modern times. With such, one can build houses, but not streets, nor towns, still less that organic sense of civilisation, culture. All the more should we value those who strive for unity, who do not use their art to advertise themselves as loudly as possible, but desire repose.

To these few belongs the latest North German artist who has returned from Munich : Peter Behrens. He seems to me typical of the development of the last few years, less as the author of tangible works—he has lacked opportunity for these hitherto—than as a vigorous agitator for non-revolutionary art. He began in Munich, producing pictures with large lines, which aimed at the expression of solemn dignity, without degenerating into commonplace. Behrens took part in the Darmstadt experiment, and came out of it more successfully than any of his comrades, because he not only designed an agreeable house, but put into it some suggestion of an agreeable householder. His work proclaimed, not the eccentric artist, but the concentrated individual. Though he had an ungrateful task at the Turin Exhibition, where the small German entrance hall with the fountain fell to his share, he made a dignified interior, the gravity of which contrasted very favourably with the many audacious pranks played at this exhibition. He learned from the Viennese the rational part of their system, to treat simple things simply, but retained his North German nature, the instinct that there are other things to toil for than chairs and tables.

Generations soon come to maturity in these days. The worthy Naturalists took a lifetime and all their art, and finally achieved the consummation of making good chairs and tables. The danger is lest, at the end of this development, they should think themselves in possession of culture. There is nothing more treacherous than this cheap self-satisfaction. Our youngest generation needs neither the long détour nor all the superfluous speech. I have never seen a more attractive dwelling than Heymel's house at Munich, built by Schröder with the help of Dülfer and Vogeler, and, above all, with taste.

What said the youthful Goethe ? "They try to make you believe that the origin of the fine arts was the natural tendency we are supposed to have to beautify the objects around us. This is not true ; for in the sense in which it might be true, the citizen and the workman may use the words, but not the philosopher."

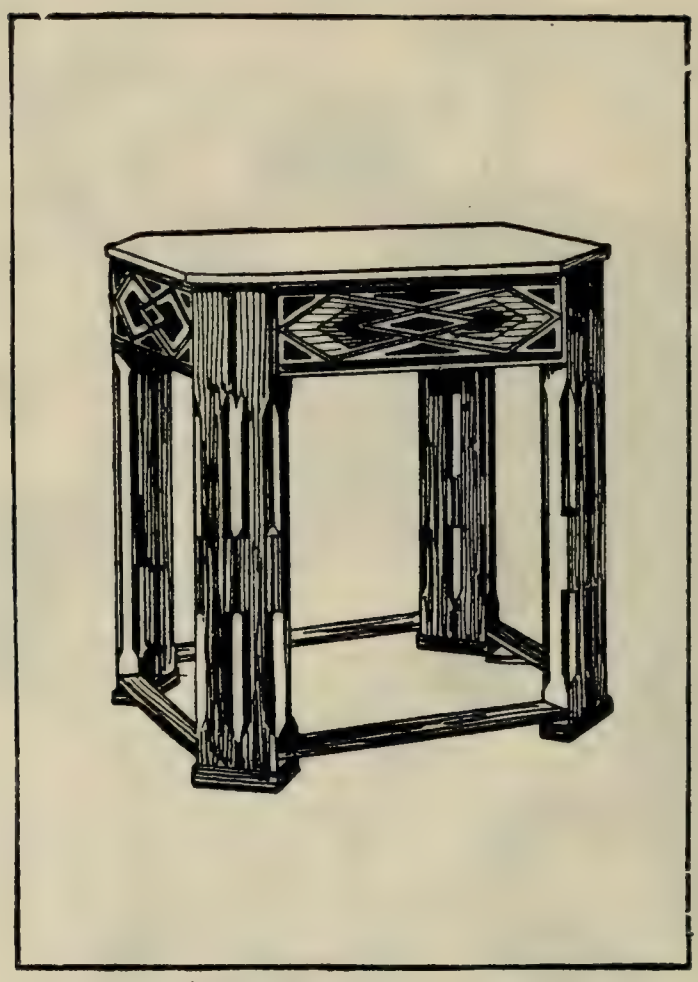
It is no more true to-day in the sense in which it is current. For the much-praised sincerity of our new furniture does not show us the great achievement of conscience which we call style. It says as little of the value of art as the praise of honesty says of the value of a man, and they who insist upon it are always poor creatures.

Our epoch contains more important things. They are so familiar to every one at present, that they are hardly recognised as style. Our grandsons will say two things of our age : that it had a proud art, which was above it, a conscience of which it knew nothing ; and that it acquired an industry, a new grandiose means of subsistence, in which it did not dare to rejoice. It will be the part of our grandsons to amalgamate the two. Our own efforts threaten but to injure either the one or the other.

THE END



BRUNO PAUL. DRAWING FROM "SIMPLIZISSIMUS."



P. BEHRENS. A TABLE.



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Printed by Ballantyne & Co. Limited
Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London



GEORG MINNE—LAETHEM.
HOLZSCHNITT: »TAUFE CHRISTI«.

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